LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA.

Serfojee Rajah 1813

2026

LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA,

ON THE

PAST AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

NORTHERN NATIONS

OF

EUROPE.

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Ingria, June 1791.

IN my laſt letters to you, I took a ſhort review of the economy of the Laplanders, and gave you a liſt of the natural curioſities under the pole.

The Laplander, clothed in his bear-ſkin, and treading among his ſnows, is perhaps one of the happieſt beings in this world. The natives of every country have their partialities to the ſpot which gave them birth, and to their own particular excellencies. The Scotch and Engliſh are for ever proclaiming the ſuperiority of their countries and the achievements of their inhabitants, and boaſting of the greater number of murders committed, the one upon the other, under the banners of their ſeveral tyrants. The Spaniards, as the conquerors of the Saracens and of the new world; the French, the Portugueſe, the German, the Dane, the Swede, the Ruſſian, have each their boaſt of excellence in ſome reſpect or other. Not one nation boaſts of ſuperior moral virtues: at leaſt, they will give up this point, if they or their anceſtors are allowed

the firſt rank in war; that their anceſtors have been the moſt celebrated banditti of old times; and that they are the ſons of their fathers. The Laplanders, who, by the by, are the greateſt cowards upon earth, and who never venture to ſpill the blood of any animal but of the bear, the rein-deer, and a few other quadrupeds, boaſt of their courage and exemplary heroiſm *in former ages*. They are now only poſſeſſed of virtue; but the Laplander, as if to prove his origin from the ſame ſource with other nations, is more tenacious of his former than of his preſent character. The virtues he poſſeſſes are local: they ſeem to have exiſted at the pole before his arrival; he did not bring them with him. The virtues of all men are rather local than mental. There are few inflexible to evil example, and obſtinately juſt.

Let me trace the Laplander in his ſimple walk through life. Of his origin I will permit him to ſpeak for himſelf.

God, ſay they, before he created the world, conſulted with Perkel or Satan, in

what form it ſhould be made, and what were to be the fitteſt productions for the ſubſiſtence of men. God himſelf intended to fill the lakes with milk inſtead of water, and that every vegetable ſhould bear the moſt choice fruit, and that the larger kind, as trees, ſhould diſtil marrow.

—— The ſacred ground
Shall weeds and pois'nous herbs refuſe to bear;
Each common buſh ſhall Syrian roſes wear;
Unlabour'd harveſts ſhall the fields adorn,
And cluſter'd grapes ſhall bluſh on every thorn.
The knotted oaks ſhall ſhowers of honey weep,
And thro' the matted graſs the liquid gold ſhall creep.
No keel ſhall cut the waves for foreign ware,
For every ſoil ſhall every product bear.
The lab'ring hind his oxen ſhall disjoin,
No plough ſhall hurt the glebe, no pruning-hook the vine.
Nor wool ſhall in diſſembled colours ſhine:
But the luxurious father of the fold,
With native purple or unborrowed gold,
Beneath his pompous fleece ſhall proudly ſweat,
And under Tyrian robes the lamb ſhall bleat.

DRYDEN'S Virgil.

The devil threw in ſome objection to this plan, and the world, with its herbs, its fruits and flowers, was created as it is now found.

found. This is the Lapland tradition of the creation of the world, and of the fall of man, and the ſubſequent calamities. Tradition has likewiſe handed down to them the hiſtory of the flood. The crimes of mankind, continues the Laponian chronology, provoked God, who in a violent paſſion turned the world topſy turvy. The ſeas, the lakes, the rivers, were thrown upon dry land, and ſwallowed up and deſtroyed all the children of men, and all animals, one man and woman only excepted. This was a brother and ſiſter. Their near relationſhip forbade the idea of procreating a new race of mortals: they ſeparated in hopes of finding, the one a huſband, the other a wife, of ſome other family ſaved from the general wreck. They travelled for a long time without ſucceſs. They met accidentally; again they ſeparated to renew the ſearch; when, after a long abſence, accident again brought them together, and, not knowing each other, they cohabited: and from them are deſcended the Poſt-diluvians.

The Laplanders do the Swedes the ho-

nour to acknowledge them for their coufins. Thefe two nations are defcended from two brothers, but they were of very different difpofitions. Journeying one day during a dreadful ftorm, the brother from whom the Swedes are defcended took fhelter under a tree. God, pitying his fituation, changed the tree into a houfe. From this cowardly fellow are defcended all nations but the Laplanders. The father of the Laplanders, more courageous and hardy, continued his journey towards Lapland. He braved the wintry blafts, and climbed undaunted the fnowy mountains, pufhing his way through the tempefts of hail, until he arrived in that country whofe inhabitants owe to him their exiftence and *their courage*. The Laplanders are undoubtedly of the fame origin with the Finlanders: both of them had been driven out from the more fouthern provinces of the North, by the anceftors of the prefent Ruffians, Swedes and Danes. A few excepted, the Laplanders are idolaters; and even thofe who have been prevailed upon to profefs Chriftianity have not

not entirely renounced their former idolatries. The human mind very early receives the impreſſion of fear, and fear is ever excited by the idea of the exiſtence of ſome creature ſuperior to us in ſtrength, wiſdom, or other excellencies. The ignorant mind cannot ſee its Creator, and, ſtruck with unuſual objects, it finds a god in them. The eye of reaſon is ſlow in its movements; the eye of ſenſe is inſtantly attached, and every unuſual object ſtrikes it forcibly. We find the Laplander worſhipping all the phenomena of nature: not a vapoury cloud ariſes from the marſhes but is pregnant as it were with ſome genius or devil. The hot ſprings, the lightning, thunder, the aurora borealis, furniſh lodgings for ſome ſpirit or other. The ſun, moon, and ſtars, apparently ſuperior in height and uniform and uſeful ſplendour, contain of conſequence the ſuperior beings. The ſun, the firſt in magnificent ſhow, we ſhall find, is worſhipped by all barbarous nations, as containing, or as being of itſelf, the ſupreme deity. The clouds are a drapery with

 which

which all ancient and modern idolaters have clothed their deities. The Grecian and Roman poets have decorated their gods and goddeſſes in clouds, without telling us ſimply, that the people worſhipped the vapours ariſing from the marſhes and lakes. I hazard this obſervation, for I do not recollect at this moment, whether the ancient Grecians did ſo or not. The earlieſt and the lateſt painters adopted the poetical hint: and we find every ſupernatural figure dreſſed in ſymbols of Grecian and Lapland mythology. The ſovereigns of Lapland are at a conſiderable expence in ſending miſſionaries among the natives, to inſtruct them in the tenets of the Chriſtian religion; yet, after a long period has expired, the Laplanders remain nearly in their original ſtate. I apprehend that theſe miſſionaries, or the coloniſts who ſettled in Lapland, give better precept than example. The choice of miſſionaries and of coloniſts ſhould be made with care: ſucceſs in the reformation of the manners of the Laplanders depends more upon example than precept. Prieſts are

not

not always the beſt acquainted with mankind, and are not the moſt proper to be employed in the works of reforming and poliſhing ignorant nations. It is not enough merely to teach the Laplander the doctrines of Chriſtianity: he ſhould be taught, too, the value of induſtry and cleanlineſs. Miſſionaries frequently content themſelves with teaching their diſciples to count their beads, a ſort of indolent adoration befitting the votaries of the god of ſleep. The monaſteries and other religious ſeminaries over all the world are the nurſeries of ſloth. Were theſe religious fed with manna from heaven, they would be a leſs burthen, and might be equally uſeful to ſociety. The Almighty does not ſeem to have intended that any of his creatures ſhould exiſt here upon prayers. This earth is certainly *the nurſery of mankind*; and, whatever may be our occupations when tranſplanted to other earths, here induſtry is as requiſite as religion. The human mind, as now conſtructed, feels diſguſt with continued religious or any other duties; it is an ocean

which

which ſtagnates with a calm, and muſt be toſſed about with winds and with tempeſts.

The following anecdotes will illuſtrate the propriety of giving barbarous nations the examples as well as the precepts of religion, morality, and induſtry. A chie fof one of the North American tribes was ſolicited to admit a French miſſionary to convert more of his ſubjects. "No," ſaid the chief: "there are too many converted already; my praying ſubjects have all of them "forgot to pay me their taxes."

A Britiſh American prieſt attempting to convert an Indian, the inhabitant of the foreſt turned ſhort upon him, and replied ſharply: "When I find that the Engliſh are "good by means of the religion they pro- "feſs, I will then adopt the ſame. When I "go to Quebec to ſell my furs," continued the Indian, "the towns-people do not aſk "me to their houſes, and entertain me as "we do them. When they viſit our coun- "try, we kindle a fire to warm the ſtran- "ger, we ſpread a matt upon which vi-

"ands

" ands are heaped for his food, and, when
" the hour of reſt draws near, furs for his
" bed and his repoſe. What is our return
" from the Chriſtians? If I enter their
" houſes and call for victuals and drink,
" they enquire whether or not I have got
" money to pay for them; and ſhew me an
" account of the expence, inſtead of taking
" friendly farewel when I am going to de-
" part. The fur merchant at whoſe houſe I
" called, upon the ſabbath, told me he would
" tranſact no commercial buſineſs upon that
" holy day; at the ſame time, he hinted,
" that he would not give me above a certain
" price for the furs. He went to church,
" at which I much rejoiced, ſeeing the
" good things he was to hear might
" ſoften his heart, and induce him to give
" me a more conſcientious price. Having
" nothing to do, I went to church likewiſe:
" but the congregation ſtared at me ſo, that
" I went out again, and waited at the
" church door for my merchant. I could
" hear the prieſt ſpeaking with great vehe-
" mence: No doubt, ſaid I to myſelf, he is
" deſiring

" desiring them to be honest and fair in
" their dealings, both to their god and to
" the Indians. Well, my merchant at last
" came out: I asked him if he would give
" me a higher price: to my astonishment
" he offered less than before. Now it was
" evident from this what the priest had
" been saying, *and that you Christians go to
" church only to learn how to cheat the Indians
" in the price of beaver.*"

The visits of the missionaries, and of the lowest orders of traders, are the only sources of information and instruction yet opened to the Laplanders: it may therefore easily be conceived what progress they have made, or are likely to make. The religious ceremonies of the natives are evidently the same with those of the Tartars, but fewer in number and less pompous. If possible, they are more superstitious, more rude, and barbarous, yet at the same time a more innocent and harmless race than their Tartar fathers. Every Laplander, besides his wooden gods, awkwardly enough constructed, is provided with a living deity or supernatural monitor

monitor in a coat of a black colour. This wiſeacre is conſidered as the principal piece of furniture in every Lapland manſion; a perſonage of great ſkill in all difficult caſes. The *media* which the ſons of men have choſen in all ages, as ſolicitors and attorneys between them and their God, muſt rather entertain than provoke the ſupreme deity. The ancient poets have gloſſed over the idols and idolatrous ceremonies of their ages: the enchantment of verſe has reconciled us to Jupiter and Vulcan, to Juno and Venus; while the deities of the Tartars, and other rites, when ſpoken of in ſimple proſe, give frequently diſguſt. Thoſe deities were nearly all the ſame, but with other names; they had the ſame origin in the vagaries of human imagination.

The Laplanders and Siberians have their wiſe men too; but they are not limited to ſeven, and may be found and conſulted with in every village: the fee of conſultation is a glaſs of brandy. Theſe philoſophical prophets, having prepared a drum, with various myſtical figures painted upon it,

it, and hung round it, work themſelves, by the aid of brandy, into a fit, and pronounce, upon their recovery, the decrees of Providence. All religious ſects have contrived to command the attention of their diſciples, and of the world, by making as much noiſe as poſſible. The Ruſſians, the near relations of the Tartars, have exchanged the drum for a dozen of bells: the Pope of Rome is the drum-major of Italy, of Spain, and ſome other nations. There are few ſectaries of Chriſtians who follow the example of their great founder; whoſe words and actions were dictated by the God of ſincerity and peace. Odin, the firſt king of the North, diſcerned the influence which religious enthuſiaſm had over the minds of his people: he joined the office of prieſt to that of king. The patriarchs of Ruſſia and Greece are ſtill habited in imperial robes. When the Grecian and Roman empires and emperors exiſted no longer, the prieſts ſeized upon their robes; the wolves dreſſed themſelves in the ſkins of the lions, and continued to practiſe their tyranny, but without any mixture of

that

that magnanimity which ſometimes diſtinguiſhed the nobler deſpots.

The religion of the ancient Scandinavians, before the arrival of Odin from Scythia, would appear to have been very ſimple: they worſhipped the ſun, in which they ſuppoſed the chief deity to exiſt. Under this ſupreme god were various others, who preſided over the ſeas, the lakes, the mountains, and foreſts; to all of whom they offered ſacrifice of brute-animals and fruits, upon ruſtic altars, conſiſting of one or more large ſtones gathered together, and ſet upright upon their ends. At Odin's arrival, this ſimplicity of worſhip was changed; not for a more refined, but a leſs innocent mode of worſhip.

Odin aſſumed the deity; and after *his death*, the Goths could not offer to warrior gods fruits and flowers: nay, the blood of beaſts was deemed too mean an offering, and human victims were dragged to the altars.

Frigga, the wife of Odin, was the goddeſs of pleaſures, the mother of fruitfulneſs, at the ſame time the Juno, the Venus, and the

the Ceres of the North. The ſons and daught rs of Odin were the inferior deities. Thor was the god of thunder and of battle, and ne t to him Tyr, another warrior god. From theſe divinities, we have the names of the days of the week: Odin, who is ſometimes called Woden, was worſhipped upon Wodenſday or Wedneſday, Thurſday was ſacred to Thor, Tyſday or Tueſday to Tyr, and Friday to Frigga. The Norwegian, Swediſh, German, and Daniſh names for the days of the week come ſtill nearer to the names of theſe great perſonages. The conqueſts of the Goths in Italy ſoon introduced into Scandinavia another change of religion; but there continued for a long time ſuch a mixture of Paganiſm with Chriſtianity, that it is difficult to fix the period of the converſion of the Gothic nations. Though Rome failed in conquering the Goths, ſhe ſucceeded in the beginning and in the end in conquering their deities. She chaſed Odin out of Scythia, and again out of Scandinavia, by giving the inhabitants of the latter her religion.

Rome

Rome after her fall, ſtill thirſting for empire of any ſort, hung herſelf round with beads and croſſes. She had perceived the great influence which the Gothic prieſts had obtained over the people. She reſolved to outdo their barbarous rites; and attracted attention, by decorating, with the moſt glaring and coſtly ornaments, the Chriſtian faith, which at this period, like the morning, began to dawn from the eaſt.

The mortal inventors of religion addreſſed themſelves to the ſenſual paſſions of men. Chriſtianity, not offering the ſame kind of rewards, had a long ſtruggle with Odiniſm and Mahomediſm. Odin conſtructed his heaven for rough barbarous warriors: Mahomed for the brave, but more luxurious Aſiatics. Such heavens ſuited the reſpective followers of the impoſtors. The elyſium and the hell of Odin were placed in this world. Theſe are to be deſtroyed, and all the inferior deities, nay, even Odin himſelf, who, by the by, only aſſumed the ſamerank with Mahomed, the chief prophet of the ſupreme God. Odin and his

ſons are to riſe with a new world, and with them all good men, whether warrior or peaſant, and this is their everlaſting abode. The diſtinguiſhing reward of brave men, was, to paſs their time agreeably to their inclinations in elyſium, until the creation of the new world: the lower orders of the people were to be leſs agreeably ſituated, I do not remember where, during the interval between their death and their reſurrection.

I will conclude theſe anecdotes of the religion of the northern natives with an extract from an ancient poem, entitled The Voluſpa, giving a deſcription of the conflagration of the world, and its renewal from its aſhes.

VOLUSPA.

The giant Rymer arrives from the eaſt, carried in a chariot—the ocean ſwells—the great ſerpent rolls himſelf furiouſly in the waters, and lifteth up the ſea—The eagle ſcreams, and tears the dead bodies with his horrid beak—The veſſel of the gods is ſet afloat; the veſſel comes from the eaſt. The hoſt of the evil genii arrives by ſea—Lake [Satan] is

their

their pilot and director—Their furious squadron advances—The black prince of the genii of fire issues from the south, surrounded with flames—the swords of the gods beam forth rays like the sun—the rocks are shaken, and fall to pieces—the female giants wander about weeping—men tread in crowds the paths of death—the heaven is split asunder.

New grief for the goddess who defends Odin! For Odin advances to encounter Fenris; the snow-white slayer of Bela, against the black prince of the genii of fire. Soon is the spouse of Frigga beaten down. Then runs Vidar, the illustrious son of Odin, to avenge his father. He attacks the murderous monster, that monster born of a giant! and with his sword he pierces him to the heart.

The sun is darkened—the sea overwhelms the earth—the shining stars vanish out of heaven—the fire furiously rages—the ages draw to an end—the flame ascending licks the vault of heaven. Then we see emerge from the bosom of the waves an earth clothed with a most lovely verdure—the floods retire

—the eagle ſoars wherever he liſts, and ſeizes his fiſhy prey on the tops of the mountains—the fields produce their fruit without culture—misfortunes are baniſhed from the world. Balder and his brother, thoſe warrior gods, return to inhabit the ruined palaces of Odin. Do ye conceive what will then come to paſs?

The gods aſſemble in the fields of Ida; they diſcourſe together concerning the heavenly palaces, whoſe ruins are before them; they recollect their former converſations, and the antient diſcourſes of Odin.

A palace more reſplendent than the ſun riſes to the view; it is adorned with a roof of gold: there the aſſemblies of good men ſhall inhabit, and give themſelves up to joy for all ages.

LETTER XXXIX.

Cuſtoms and Manners of the Laplanders.—Lapland Courtſhip.—Lapland Language.—Of their Marriages.—Reſemblance of Lapland with Aſiatic Manners.—Manufactures.—Navigating the Rivers very dangerous.—M. Pallas's Account of the Birch-tree, and of its various Uſes, and even as a Food to the Northerns.—Diſeaſes and Remedies—Dreſs.—Offer their Women to Strangers.—Their Love of Money.—Le Monnier's Deſcription of Aurora Borealis.—Anecdote of Mr. Howard.—Severity of the Lapland Climate.—Le Monnier's picturesque Deſcription of the Face of Nature in Lapland.

Ingria, June 1791.

THE ſea Laplanders and the mountain Laplanders differ conſiderably from each other in cuſtoms and manners. The ſea

Laplander, or fiſherman, is more ſtationary than the other, and, in ſome reſpects, more comfortably ſituated, though not ſo rich as the mountaineer, whoſe numerous herds of rein-deer afford him everv neceſſary of life.

One rein-deer cow becomes the property of a child as ſoon as it is born. The calves of this cow are carefully preſerved, and the young Laplander finds a valuable eſtate belonging to him, when he arrives at the age of diſcretion, and when he is qualified to begin the trade of his fathers. But, among the Laplanders, as among other northern nations, a man is not looked upon to be properly eſtabliſhed in the world before he is married. A Lapland youth, whether inſpired by love's ſweet flame, or enamoured with jointure-land, commences his ſuit by preſenting the young lady with rich furs or ſuch articles, and the parents with brandy. Upon this momentous occaſion, and in his journey to the hut of his laſs, which is ſometimes at a great diſtance, the lover is accompanied with a friend. The dying ſwain allows this friend to

 go

go firſt into the cottage: he remains in the cold fields, and waits with equal patience and anxiety to hear of his fate. The ſalute upon entering their houſes is by inclining the head, and by naming the inhabitants holy brothers, or holy ſiſters.

If the brandy is accepted by the parents, and the eloquent ſpeech delivered by this love-token approved of, the young man, covered with a wolf-ſkin, is deſired to approach. Encouraged by this dawn of hope, he ſtrokes his forehead, and makes an oration upon the beauty and high accompliſhments of his intended bride, as his procurator had immediately before upon the wealth and courage of the ſuitor. Should it happen that the young couple are neither of them rich, they remain for ſome time with the bride's parents, and until they have acquired, by their induſtrious exertions, a ſufficient ſtock.

If, after matters have been agreed upon, the bride retract from her engagements, the parents are obliged to return every preſent made during the courtſhip, and to pay the

expence which the bridegroom had been put to in brandy and other articles, in entertainments. Scheffer has given us ſome ſpecimens of the Lapland love-ſongs, which have eſtabliſhed the character of the Lapland poetry; but their ſinging is not equal to their poetry: their voice is harſh and ſqueaking. The Laponian language by the accounts of ſome writers is uncouth; others report it to be ſoft and expreſſive. M. Leem compiled a dictionary of the Lapland language, and we owe to him the moſt credit for the latter character of it. It has ſeveral terms to expreſs the different kinds of roads and mountains, and to diſtinguiſh the age, the bulk, the fatneſs, the ſwiftneſs, or other property or excellence of the rein-deer. The moods of the verbs are more numerous than in any other language; and there are thirteen different caſes of their nouns ſubſtantive.

But the Laponian is not the only language of barbarians which contains excellencies equal, if not ſuperior, to thoſe of more poliſhed nations. The language of the ſa-

vage

vage Hurons of North America is celebrated by travellers for its ſtrength and pathos, and the Algonquin tongue for its ſoftneſs and elegance.

The original ceremonials of marriage in Lapland were very ſimple, and required only the conſent of the parties, and a lucky day to cohabit together: thoſe among them who have been converted to Chriſtianity permit the Ruſſian, Swediſh, or Norwegian prieſt to unite their hands.

The newly married couple being arrived in their hut commence the buſineſs of life. The huſband attends to his herds or to his fiſhing, as his ſituation may be upon the mountains or by the ſea ſhore. The wife is employed within doors in manufacturing not only all articles of dreſs, but in making furniture, as cradles, ſpoons, ſhovels, and diſhes of various ſorts; the huſband aſſiſts in theſe manufactures when at leiſure. The Laplanders uſe no chairs: like their anceſtors in Aſia, they ſit croſs-legged upon mats or ſkins laid upon the floor, which ſerve, at the ſame time, for the table-cloth at dinner and

and other meals. These likewiſe compoſe their beds. It is amuſing to contemplate ſimilarity of cuſtoms between two people now ſo oppoſite in many reſpects: to view the luxurious Aſiatic ſitting in all the pomp of the Eaſt at a magnificent banquet, ſerved up in diſhes of gold and ſilver in his palace in the plains of Indoſtan, and to behold the rude Laplander ſeated upon his hams too in his hut under the pole, and devouring the carcaſe of a bear or a wolf. The landlord and landlady occupy the place neareſt the fire, the ſons and daughters of the family the next adjoining apartment, and the ſervants the outer chamber. The Lapland bed-rooms may be eaſily ſuppoſed to be none of the moſt ſuperb; and it is only the houſes of the wealthy that are divided into three apartments by means of boards, or coarſe cloths or ſkins. In more ordinary habitations, the whole inhabitants repoſe themſelves around the fire-place with little diſtinction: but this cuſtom is not attended with the conſequences which delicacy may apprehend. It may ſeem ſtrange that a peo-

ple

ple ſo low in civilization and in rank in ſociety ſhould have ſervants among them; and that a nation ſo near upon an equality ſhould have inferiors: but here, as in other countries, riches, of whatever ſpecies, conſtitute degrees of rank: a Laplander without a herd of rein-deer is a poor man, and becomes a ſervant of him who has numerous herds. Herds of rein-deer are in Lapland as landed eſtates are elſewhere: the perſons who do not poſſeſs them, are in the ſituation of ſervants, merchants, and manufacturers, dependent, and ſearching every where, and into every branch, for employment.

The Laplanders are no leſs ingenious than the Norwegians and Finlanders in making various wooden utenſils. The largeſt of this ſpecies of manufacture are their boats or canoes with which they navigate their rivers, rendered exceedingly dangerous by falls. Theſe canoes are of two kinds; either conſtructed out of one entire piece of timber, or built with thin bark of trees ſewed together, and the ſeam caulked with moſs inſtead of oakum: were the canoes built of plank

plank they would not anſwer, ſince it requires a veſſel capable of yielding to the ſtony bottom, as well as to the violent and whirling current and whirlpools in the river. The firſt ſort of canoes are uſed only upon the lakes. The canoes of bark are ſo ſmall and light, as to be carried even by one perſon from river to river as occaſion requires; and the Laplander, having borne his veſſel acroſs the land, is carried in his turn upon the waters by this ſort of portable navy common to many Indian nations.

The trunk and bark of the birch tree are to the natives as uſeful in the vegetable, as their rein-deer in the animal world. The Tartars apply it to a ſtill greater variety of purpoſes.

" The birch," ſays M. Pallas, " is one of " the moſt uſeful trees in the northern world. " The wood not only ſerves for fuel and " various œconomical purpoſes, but from the " crooked trees, and parts of trees, are made " wheels and other articles that require very " hard timber. The outer white bark, boiled, " and ſewed together, is uſed by ſome Tartars

" for

" for covering their huts and tents: by others
" for making portable canoes, cradles, chefts,
" water-cafks, and a variety of kitchen furni-
" ture: and by the Ruffians for thofe ufeful
" and durable veffels in which they preferve
" their meat and liquors. This bark may
" be taken off, without hurting the tree, in
" a certain manner, and is thus ufed for dif-
" tilling the birch-oil. The inner bark when
" bruifed, is eaten by the Kamtfchatkadales;
" and when boiled with alum, it tinges wool
" of an iron colour. A yellow dye is ob-
" tained from the leaves. The knots of the
" trunk are of ufe to the turner. The juice
" dropping from the wounded ftem at the
" time when the buds are forming, affords
" a moft grateful drink, not only when
" recent, but when fermented with honey;
" and when growing four it is made into
" fugar. The birch oil, to which the cele-
" brated Ruffia leather owes its agreeable
" fmell, is prepared from the white bark,
" either taken from the live tree, or from
" trees that lie putrid in the woods. It is
" beft when made of the latter fort, becaufe,
" by

"by the putrefaction it is freed from the
"inner bark, and the external white bark
"remains uncorrupted for ages, as appears
"from the old burial places at Ienifea, and
"the vaults of the very antient caftle at Mof-
"cow, which, I obferved, were covered with
"birch bark. The bark is gathered into a
"heap, and preffed into pits made in the
"fhape of a funnel prepared in a clay foil,
"and when fet on fire is covered with turf.
"The oil, diftilling through the clay-hole at
"the bottom of the funnel, drops into a
"veffel placed to receive it, and is then put
"into cafks made of the hollowed trunk of
"a tree. The pure limpid oil fwims at top,
"and is in the greateft requeft for anointing
"leather on account of its antifeptic quality.
"The refiduum is thick and footy, and is
"employed for various common ufes. The
"pure birch oil does not feem deftitute of
"medical virtues, and is often ufed by the
"common people both internally and ex-
"ternally, particularly in venereal cafes."

The Laplanders in their canoes will fail down very rapid falls of the rivers, guiding the

the canoe as well as they can with the oars; the foaming ſtream daſhing around them, and covering them from the ſight. When before the wind, they ſubſtitute for a ſail the leafy branch of a tree.

The Laplanders no leſs excel in the ingenious ſimplicity of other manufactures and arts. They make thread, as already obſerved, from the tendons of the rein-deer; ſhoes, boots, and gloves, of his ſkin: of the horns of this animal they make ſnuff-boxes, ſpoons, and *almanacks*, marking upon the horn certain notches for days, weeks, and months; and by this uncommon regiſter they keep an exact account of the ſeaſons of the year.

Large and ſmaller ropes they make from the thready roots of trees, and from a ſea weed they furniſh a wick for their lamps. Their bows, arrows, and lances are made of birch, and handſomely ornamented with carved work. I have formerly noticed, that the Laplanders, having few earthly ſubſtances for manufactures and trade, employed aërial matter, and retailed out thun-

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der and lightning, hail and ſtorms, or fair weather and ſunſhine, as they were in demand.

While a Laplander provides himſelf with a bow of timber, he furniſhes the Deity with one of a very ſuperb ſtructure. It is with the rainbow, ſays the ingenious and poetical Laplander, that the good beings ſhoot the malevolent ſpirits of the mountains, the woods and lakes. The Laplanders are excellent bow-and-lance-men. I muſt add to the liſt of Laponian manufactures that of magical drums, curiouſly made, and painted with various emblematical figures. Though the pagan *doctors* among them are the regular profeſſors of the art infernal, yet every Laplander is a dabbler in his way; and, whatever other wealth they may have to beſtow upon their children, they never fail to teach them the myſterious or occult ſciences, and with as much care as parents in other countries procure for their ſons Greek, Latin, Mathematics, French, &c.

The diſeaſes of the inhabitants of the

northern deferts are few, and the remedies for them fimple. The *doctors* are their phyficians both for the foul and body; they are their lawyers too: no wonder then, that, uniting in their perfons the three moft lucrative branches of trade-religion, law, and phyfic, they fhould be rich. An apothecary's fhop in this country, exclufively of magical medicines, contains few articles befides herbs and whale oil. The difeafes prevalent are the fmall pox, and pains in the eyes from the continual reflection of the fnow. When a Laplander returns from hunting, he is unable to fee, or to lift his eye-lids, for fome hours or even days. For the fmall-pox they drink the blood of the rein-deer, and make outward application of boiled herbs. When any limb of the body is in pain, they hold the affected part to the fire until it burfts and bleeds.

The Lapland women, and indeed the women of Greenland and other countries beyond the arctic circle, are not troubled with fome complaints peculiar to the fex;

 and,

and, what appears an uncommon remedy, they drink large draughts of oil for ſome time before child-birth, which they pretend render their labours eaſy. But oil is the favourite beverage of the northerns, as well as brandy: and the Lapland lady in the ſtraw no doubt takes this opportunity of obtaining what ſhe likes beſt. Brandy and oil are the caudles uſed at Lapland chriſtenings.

The wealthy Laplanders are dreſſed in a richer manner than the poorer claſſes: the ladies in particular indulge in all the ſplendour of beads, pebbles, and gilt wire. The ſkin of the black fox affords a dreſs truly elegant. It is ſaid that the Laplanders are not jealous huſbands: that on the contrary they offer their women to handſome ſtrangers. Squat, black, and deformed themſelves, they probably adopt this plan to improve the breed of ſons and daughters. Perhaps the ladies are the moſt forward in theſe negotiations. The manners of a Lapland huſband are not entirely according to the wiſhes of the fair ſex; yet they have their

their ideas of good breeding, as well as of the affectation of it: and when a youthful Laplander dreſſes in finer furs than his rank may entitle him to do, they ſay that ſuch a perſon gives himſelf the airs of a gelded rein-deer. Theſe animals, being remarkable for their fatneſs, being fed for ſlaughter, and not worked, are always in high ſpirits and friſky.

A Laplander, having provided for his family, and ſettled them in the world, is anxious to preſerve what riches are left, in coin, which he hides in ſome ſecret place, or under ground, as a proviſion for himſelf in the next world. Yet he is not parſimonious, like the Tartars. The Laplanders contribute to aſſiſt a neighbour reduced to poverty; and, as among the Norwegian peaſants, frequently preſent ſilver and gold in a plate to diſtinguiſhed gueſts, deſiring them to take what they chooſe. Theſe are exactly Aſiatic cuſtoms: neither juſtice nor injuſtice can be procured in Aſia without money: the magiſtrate is bribed to do his duty, and the aſſaſſin to execute his commiſſion.

It is the reward of every meritorious as well as the incitement to every base action. Visits and embassies are preceded by presents: these are the media not only of commerce, but of politics, and of every transaction—the price of vice and of virtue too. This picture of Asiatic manners under the pole, though coarse, is striking. — There are several mountains here containing veins of gold and silver, which are sometimes worked by the respective governments.

I have attempted, with the strictest regard to the best accounts and information, this sketch of the customs and manners of a race of men little known. There are few nations so neglected by nature as not to have it in their power, by shaking off indolence and vicious habits, to be happier than they actually are; and few from whom others may not draw instructive lessons, however stupid and ignorant they may appear at first sight.

Every traveller into Lapland describes with raptures the enchanting prospects presented to the eye of the admirer of nature,

in winter, as well as in fummer. During the former period, not only the moon, but the aurora borealis, throws a flame of light over the frozen lands and feas. The icy precipices fparkle in the moon-beams, and appear as if hung around with diamond lamps. The fnowy mountains rife one above the other, and are hardly to be diftinguifhed from the clouds of heaven, unlefs where the black forefts dot their fides. The moon, the fteady lamp of night, is dimly feen amidft the brighter difplay of the aurora borealis. Le Monnier, one of the companions of M. Maupertuis in their travels through Lapland, after relating a perilous journey acrofs frozen mountains, thus continues: "If the earth in "this climate be thus horrible, the heavens "prefent to the eye a profpect moft beautiful. So foon as night approaches, fires of "a thoufand different colours and figures "light up the firmament, as if intended by "nature to lengthen out the fhort winter "day, and to fupply the abfence of the "fun. Thefe lights have not, as in more

" ſoutherly climates, any conſtant ſituation,
" though you may often ſee a luminous
" arch fixed towards the north. They
" ſeem moſt commonly to overſpread the
" whole heavens. Sometimes they begin
" in the ſhape of an immenſe ſcarf of light,
" with its extremities reſting on the hori-
" zon; and, with a motion like that of a fiſh-
" net, glide ſwiftly up the ſkies, preſerving
" in this progreſs a direction nearly per-
" pendicular to the meridian. Moſt com-
" monly, ſucceeding theſe preludes, all the
" lights unite at the zenith, repreſenting in
" form the top of a crown: their figure
" and motion exactly reſemble the waving
" of colours, and their different tints of
" light repreſent the ſort of taffeties which
" we call changeable.

" Sometimes they paint a corner of the
" ſky a ſcarlet colour; and upon the 18th
" of December the whole conſtellation of
" Orion looked as if it had been dipped
" in blood. The light, which was fixed
" at firſt, ſoon was in motion; and, changing
" into other colours of violet and blue, ſet-
" tled

" tled into a dome, whofe top ftood towards " the fouth-weft of the zenith. The " moon fhone bright, but did not in the " leaft efface it. In this country, where " there are lights of fo many varying hues, " I never faw more than two that were " red, and fuch are taken for prefages of " great calamities; and when we look upon " thefe phenomena with an unphilofophical " eye, no wonder that we difcover fiery " chariots, armies engaged, and other " dreadful appearances."

The Lapland winter, with all its rigours of cold, has its advantages and conveniencies, and is indeed a more defirable feafon than the fummer, in which the inhabitants, both men and cattle, are tormented with the gnats or mufquitoes. I have already noticed that the Laplander anoints his body with a preparation of oily fubftance and rein-deer milk, to prevent the attack of this infect. They cannot all of them afford this ointment; and the herdfmen, while attending the cattle, make a fire, and, fitting amidft the fmoke, evade the foe. The cure, if we recollect the fultry heat of the fummer, when this method

is practised, is almost as bad as the disease. The celebrated Mr. Howard, whom I saw at Petersburgh in 1789, complained much of the pain he suffered from the gnats. A Russian gentleman, who wished to display his wit, desired Mr. Howard to get frequently drunk, which would heat his skin to that degree, that the gnat would certainly retreat at the first touch.

We may judge of the severity of a Lapland winter, when we are informed that rivers are often frozen to seven feet in thickness; and of the contrasted heat in summer, in which the sun for a considerable period is seen revolving round the heavens, frequently setting the woods on fire, and occasioning such a rapidity of vegetation that the grain is reaped in four and five weeks from the time it was sowed. But there are few spots fit for agriculture: the soil of Lapland is thin, and for the most part moorish. The trees in the forest rise only to a diminutive size, and even this the soil cannot support. These trees are found lying in every path, and interrupting the hunters.

Of the face of this country in summer Le Monnier

Monnier thus writes: "From the top of "the mountain Avafcaxa the profpect is "delightful and unbounded towards the "fouth, in which direction we faw the "courfe of the river to a vaft diftance. "This view is terminated by a prodigious "number of mountains heaped the one "above the other, as if to reprefent chaos. "The north-eaft fide is a frightful preci-"pice, where the hawks build their nefts. "At the bottom runs the river Tenglio. "During a ftay of ten days upon this "mountain Avafcaxa, curiofity procured us "feveral vifits from the Laplanders, who "brought us fifh and fheep, and fuch bad "fruit as their woods produced. On other "mountains we were ftill more grievoufly "incommoded with the flies. The foldiers "who accompanied us, though accuftomed "to every fpecies of hardfhip, were fain to "cover their faces with tar or oil. The "mufquitoes fettled in clouds upon their "victuals, and rendered them in a moment "ufelefs. We croffed feveral lakes and rivers "in our journey in fmall canoes, and fome-

" times through dark and thick foreſts. " The third lake we paſſed conveyed us to " the foot of the mountain Neimi: the " beautiful water pieces ſurrounding this " mountain, arriving as we did through " a dreary and dangerous journey, gave us " the utmoſt pleaſure, and the effect of en- " chantment to this elegant landſcape. The " inſulated mountain appeared as the work " of necromancy; and, were it not in Lap- " land, would indeed be a moſt delightful " place. On one hand you ſee a grove of " trees riſe from a plain, ſmooth and level as " the walks of a garden, and at ſuch a con- " venient diſtance as not to interrupt the " pleaſant walk we had through them, nor " the proſpect of the lake waſhing the bor- " ders.

" In the rocks upon the oppoſite ſide of " the mountain, are formed, by the hand of " nature, ſpacious apartments: and the rocks " without theſe are ſo perpendicular, ſo " high and ſo ſmooth, as to give the idea of " the walls of ſome ſtrong fortreſs, or of an " unfiniſhed palace. From the mountain's

" ſides

" ſides we obſerved thoſe vapours riſe from
" the marſhes and lakes which the Lapland-
" ers call Haltios, and which they believe
" to contain the guardian deities of the
" mountains."

LET-

LETTER XL.

Attack made by the Swedish Fleet upon a Russian Squadron at Revel.—The Russian Fleet fitted out at Cronstadt in the course of a few Days, and sails for the Gulph of Finland.

St. Petersburg, June 1791.

YOU desire to be informed of the truth respecting the naval campaign of the Swedes and Russians in 1790; concerning which you have had various and contradictory reports. The operations of the Swedish grand fleet began with an attack upon that part of the Russian navy usually laid up at Revel, and they conducted the enterprise with the same spirit which planned it; though, by an accident, it proved finally abortive. This attempt was made at a time when the principal squadrons of the Russian navy were lying aground

aground and unrigged in the harbour of Cronſtadt. The Ruſſian fleet, conſiſting of only ten ſhips of the line, were in the utmoſt danger of being totally deſtroyed by the enemy's fleet, compoſed of twenty-two ſail, and manned with veteran ſeamen. The Swedes attribute their failure to a ſudden change of wind. They loſt two ſhips of the line, which got on ſhore, and were burnt by themſelves, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Ruſſians.

You cannot eaſily conceive the confuſion and terror at Peterſburgh, when the government were informed by expreſs of this daring aſſault; or of the joy and exultation here, when another expreſs conveyed the intelligence of the retreat of the Swediſh armada. The ſhips at Cronſtadt were neither rigged nor manned. There were only three ſhips afloat, and in the roadſtead, and even theſe few had been neceſſitated to land their guns before they could be brought out of harbour. The calm weather and other circumſtances occaſioned this lowneſs of the water. Here are no regular tides. Theſe

depend

depend upon the courſe of the winds, and the high or low water in the gulph of Finland. For inſtance: when the wind is from the weſtward, or blowing from the Baltic towards Cronſtadt and Peterſburgh, it brings with it in rolling waves an increaſed collection of waters, and covers the dry ſea beach, from which the waters had retreated during eaſterly winds, or a long ſeries of calm or dry weather.

I found the inhabitants and ſeamen at Cronſtadt crowding on board their navy; the firſt to view the preparations going forward for their defence; the latter carrying their cheſts and baggage. I remained ſeveral days at Cronſtadt; and it was wonderful indeed, in the courſe of a few days to behold the whole of the Ruſſian fleet in the roadſtead, victualled, manned, and in every reſpect ready for meeting the enemies of the empire. I never before witneſſed ſuch exertion, or ſo grand a ſpectacle of vigour and power. Moſt of the ſhips in harbour had to land their guns, and again to have them put on board in the bay. Small fleets of

veſſels were ſeen daily arriving from Peterſburgh and Oranienbaum, loaded with all manner of proviſions and ſtores: upon their very decks were piled baggage, ſails, cordage, clothing of every kind for the ſeamen; innumerable jackets, trowſers, hats, ſtockings, ſhoes. The ſoldiers' arms added to this ſhow, muſkets, piſtols, ſwords, halberts, yet unſtained with blood, and newly brought from the ingenious manufactories of human miſery. Other veſſels were loaded with recruits from the inland villages, ſtaring wildly around them at theſe unuſual ſcenes, and curſing in their hearts the turbulent minds, the tyranny, and ambition of princes. Articles neceſſary to conciliate, or inſpire the hero's ſoul to murder and glory, lay ſcattered about: the thundering drum, the ear-piercing fife, the ſhrill trumpet, the ſtandards, and all the pride and pomp of villanous war. The ſtill face of the gulph echoed with the bawling of the ſailors: the boatſwains' whiſtles from every ſhip made the air ring. The cat-o'nine-tails ſounded upon the backs of training warriors; and this

this ſound, mixed with ſhrieks of the pupils of Mars and of Neptune, completed the ſcene. I ſupped with the ſurgeon to the Britiſh ſettlers in Cronſtadt. He was an Iriſhman, whoſe houſe and heart and cellar were open to every one. The company conſiſted of Britons, and we had *ſix bottles more* before we parted. It was with difficulty I found out my lodgings. As I traverſed the ſtreets, the Ruſſian ſentinels were calling their rounds, and paſſing the watchword. I was no ſpy; ſo my mind was at eaſe, and I anſwered their watch-words with *Britannia rules the waves.* The Ruſſians know our way, and ſeldom obſerve ſtrict rules with Engliſhmen. My lodgings were ſhut up, and every animal within doors aſleep except the houſe-dog. He knew my voice: but he could not open the door. I wandered to the ramparts: the ſentinel was ſnoring aloud in his box; not one thought of war, or ambition, or victory diſturbed his mind. His rough countenance bore, as much as it was capable of, the ſmoothneſs of complacency and unreſiſting meekneſs.

Perhaps

Perhaps Catharine II, perhaps Guſtavus III, are at this moment in aweful ſuſpenſe of mind tumbling their pillow. The Swediſh fleet was approaching Cronſtadt. From the ramparts I journeyed to the piers, which, however are a ſort of continuation of ramparts, and planted with cannon. The whole Ruſſian fleet, in this quarter, lay directly without the piers, and ſome of them not fifty yards diſtant from the place where I was ſtanding. It conſiſted of ſeventeen ſail of the line; ſeven of which were one hundred gun ſhips. The ſummer nights in Ruſſia are never dark. I ſaw diſtinctly every object around me. Univerſal ſilence reigned, or was interrupted only by the calling of the ſentinels. The morning had not yet dawned upon the land and ſeas. At this moment I heard the ſound of martial muſic from the Admiral's ſhip. Silence again reſumed her ſeat—The horizon gradually reddened in the eaſt—the morning gun awoke the Ruſſian ſeamen to labour and war. The various ſcene created reflection, and reflection diſpelled the fumes of wine.

Crowds of people were daily flocking to Cronſtadt to view this armada. The officers were entertaining their friends on board, and dancing and ſinging together in the cabins, and in the ſtern galleries. The whole fleet ſailed before I left Cronſtadt, ſaluting the town and fortreſs, which returned their ſalute with repeated thunder from the ramparts. In a future letter I ſhall ſend you an account of the meeting of the hoſtile navies.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

Contraſt between Peterſburgh and London—Propoſed Improvements for the Britiſh Metropolis—Anecdote of Mr. Howard—Aſiatic Cuſtoms and Manners of the Ruſſians.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

AMIDST theſe frozen regions, a ſtranger is ſurpriſed to find Aſiatic cuſtoms, and Aſiatic magnificence. Peterſburgh ſprings up amidſt the bogs of Finland, a ſecond Delhi, a ſecond Iſpahan. The compariſon holds equally near between the Aſiatic and the Northern ſovereigns. Who does not ſee a ſecond Arungzebe, a ſecond Tzinghis Khan in Peter; a ſecond Semiramis in Catharine of Anhault?

Like the aurora borealis, they have lighted up the northern deſerts; and the arts and ſciences have found their way to the pole.

Peterſburgh, ſo far as it is finiſhed, is the handſomeſt city in Europe; and one almoſt forgets the evils which too frequently attend arbitrary governments, when he beholds the noble regularity and elegance of a capital, which could have been executed only under an arbitrary ſovereign.

It is too great a degree of liberty, when a peeviſh or low-minded individual has it in his power to hurt the ſuperb deſigns of architecture, by interrupting the uniformity and elegance of cities by ſome mean building of his own planning. Is it not to be regretted that the firſt city in the world in point of wealth, on account of the cauſe alluded to ſhould be among the laſt in uniform elegance? London is rather a collection of houſes than a city: an aggregate of meanneſs and ſplendour. It may be urged, that elegance does not ſuit the convenience of trade: but Peterſburgh is a proof of the contrary. London itſelf is in many inſtances a proof of the contrary. The truth is, that elegance does not ſuit the low ideas of the generality of mercantile people,

and it requires the interference of a legiſla-ture to redeem our metropolis from the hands of traders. They are the moſt uſe-ful ſubjects of every ſtate, but they are bad engineers and architects.

The poets have told falſehoods in men-tioning the exiſtence of river gods. If any exiſted, there muſt be ſome in the Thames: and if there were, they would forbid their ſtreams to paſs betwixt London and South-wark, and to waſh the dirty wharfs, and other conveniencies of trade which diſgrace its banks. The celebrated Adam, in that noble building the Adelphi, has given a pat-tern for the improvement of the banks of the noble river which it lines. The banks upon both ſides of the Thames above Lon-don Bridge ſhould be faced with ſtone, and a ſpacious ſtreet and range of buildings ſhould grace the piers, in the ſame manner as at Peterſburgh. If individual proprietors would not conſent to execute this plan, our government might purchaſe the property at a fair valuation, and diſpoſe of it again to many enterpriſing gentlemen who would

inftantly re-purchafe it. The uncommon as well as the fuperior elegance and conveniency of the fituation for the wealthy nobility, gentry and merchants, would abundantly repay the architects and builders. Thus the Thames would be reftored as to life; and his fhores inhabited and decorated by thofe men who derive their happinefs and riches from the commercial intercourfe which his ftreams facilitate.

The improvements upon the river's banks below London bridge might be conftructed chiefly for the conveniencies of trade, with as fmall alterations however as thefe objects will admit of. Such improvements would extend in due courfe of time from the river; and the miferable ftreets and lanes, now in the very heart of London and Weftminfter, gradually be rebuilt upon a magnificent, as well as more convenient conftruction. Thefe immenfe cities refemble a pine apple which is rotten at the heart: their centres give difguft to more fenfes than the eye. The fuburbs ought to be the refidence of the poor, and particularly for

the

the cheapneſs of rents, and other convenien-cies which ſuburbs will always beſt afford them. Inſtead therefore of extending, as at preſent, the fineſt ſtreets and buildings upon the dead plain which ſurrounds our metro-polis, let houſes of ſimple architecture be erected. The induſtrious and the poor will inſtantly reſort to them, and the proprietors of houſes in the midſt of the city will be obliged to rebuild them in another form; ſome ſtreets for the reception of the higher ranks, and others for wealthy ſhop keepers.

In Peterſburgh the ſhops are collected together in the Aſiatic ſtyle, and ſerve as ſhops and warehouſes only. But this is not a good plan. The grand diſplay of com-merce which we view wherever we walk in London, as well as the ſplendid illumina-tion of the ſtreets from the ſhop windows, muſt give at firſt ſight a deciſion in favour of our mode, even before we recollect the other advantages attending it. Our ſhop-keepers, by lodging with their families on the ſpot where their buſineſs is carried on, have their property always under their im-

mediate care, and derive confiderable affiftance from their wives and children.

A Ruffian fhop-keeper, befides the expence of clerks, muft leave his fhop at every meal, and in the evening defert it altogether. Above every fhop door in Ruffia is placed the figure of fome guardian faint. The fhop-keeper upon leaving his warehoufe after locking the door, and putting a feal upon it, to break which laft is deemed the moft atrocious crime, croffes himfelf before the holy painting, thanks it for the quick fale of his goods upon that day, and intreats it to guard his valuables during his abfence.

I fhould only wifh the Afiatic ftyle of fhop-keeping to be followed in the fale of animal food: the moft retired fpots of cities fhould be fixed upon, though at convenient fituations for the inhabitants. It reflects no honour upon our feelings, to have the carcafes of animals that once poffeffed life, and inftinct approaching to reafon, hung up in every corner to incite, but which fhould rather pall, our appetites. It

becomes

becomes the government of a country to reform a cuſtom ſo diſgraceful to humanity.

Mr. Howard would have carried his reflections upon this topic farther. He was invited to dine at the houſe of a gentleman in Peterſburgh: he delayed coming until he imagined the dinner would be over and the viands * removed from table; when he ordered a plate of potatoes for his meal.

The Aſiatics conſtruct every building, public and private, in the form of a ſquare: and the Ruſſians, *ab origine* Aſiatics, inherit this taſte. Not only their market places and all buildings for tranſacting buſineſs are of this form, but likewiſe every building for the purpoſes of pleaſure or magnificence. The houſes of the princes and nobles are conſequently more ſuperb, but leſs neat and convenient, than thoſe of modern ſtructure. The whole ſuite of apartments ſerve as entrances to each other. The inhabitant wiſhes you to paſs through them

* Mr. Howard gave them another name.

all, before you arrive at the room where he ſits and entertains company. In paſſing you behold the open ſquare which the palace itſelf incloſes, and the range of windows and apartments upon the oppoſite ſide, which certainly has a grand effect; the architecture and ornaments being all in the moſt finiſhed taſte. This incloſed ſquare is the world of every Aſiatic: whereever he throws his eyes, he beholds his own property and works; the property and works of others are ſhut out: and here he reclines upon a ſopha drinking his coffee, or otherways regaling himſelf amidſt his numerous viſitors and attendants. Yet the Ruſſians in cities, at leaſt in this metropolis, after the manner of the Germans and French, affect to be more public than private in their entertainments and aſſemblies; and the rooms fronting the ſtreets and highways are the moſt occupied by the inhabitants.

As in Aſia too, every perſon has his peculiar province, and this province and profeſſion frequently deſcends to their poſ-

terity,

terity. A ſtranger is apt to commit many blunders in aſking a Ruſſian domeſtic to do ſome work which is not his inheritance.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

Summer Amuſements of the Ruſſian Nobility—Anecdote of a Pariſian Lady—Celebration of the fourth of June in a Ruſſian Wood.—Anecdote of a Britiſh Officer—of the Finland Girls.—Situation of the Slaves.—Contraſt of Character between Aſiatics and Europeans.—Ruſſians converſe with their Horſes, as do all Aſiatics.—Horſe-racing patroniſed by Count Orloff.—The preſent degenerated State of the Tartars.

Ingria, July 1791.

YOU would naturally think that no ſituation could be more retired than the centre of a Ruſſian foreſt—You are miſtaken. Here is a ſmall lake, in which I fiſh, ſurrounded with woods. I never conceived it poſſible to be diſturbed in my retreat by other than Satyrs and Naiads, or to behold any other diſtinguiſhed perſonage than Pan himſelf.

himſelf. I am, however, daily interrupted. Princes and princeſſes, counts and barons, like ſo many river deities and goddeſſes, are frequently wandering about with their fiſhing-rods.

The Princeſs Gallitzin, Count Cobentzel (the imperial ambaſſador), General Markoff (director of the college of foreign affairs), and other ladies and gentlemen, took away the boat in which I navigate this inland ſea. I will make a complaint to Catharine. I can prove my claim to this lake by near two years' poſſeſſion.

The great people in Ruſſia conduct themſelves with leſs ceremony than thoſe of any other nation. This company are regaling themſelves with Engliſh beer, upon the banks of the lake. I have ſeen the firſt ranks ſeated upon the granite benches upon the banks of the Neva, oppoſite to ſome tavern, which ſupplied them with lemonade: and here, which is the public ſtreet, they were as much at home as in their own drawing-rooms.

When I returned to the poſt-houſe, a chaiſe

chaiſe and ſix horſes had juſt arrived; it contained a very young and beautiful lady. The troſky with the Princeſs Galitzin and her company paſſed their carriage. At this inſtant the unknown fair-one drew the curtain: this, no doubt, excited the curioſity of General Markoff, who came into the poſt-houſe, and aſked for a ſight of the lady's paſſport.—He read, and ſmiled.—The charming lady in the chaiſe was a French *fill-de-joie*, who had accompanied a Ruſſian Prince from Paris. He grew tired of her, and ſhe has a conſiderable annuity from him, which, with aids from ſeveral acquaintances of rank, enables her to live in ſtyle.

I had with me at dinner, ſome days ago, half a dozen Britons; and we made the woods, which were cloſe at our windows, re-echo with "God ſave the King." An old maſter of a ſhip of war added *Britannia rules the waves*, and *Hearts of oak.* The Ruſſians looked up to us with admiration, and, no doubt, thought that theſe were the favourite airs upon the Britiſh * *balileka.*

* See vol. I. p. 90.

This

This old tar has retired from the Ruſſian ſervice, becauſe he is diſappointed of promotion. He ſays that the Chevalier de Litter, under whom he was firſt lieutenant, promiſed him a higher rank, and to procure for him a preſent in money. The chagrined veteran vents his curſes upon the whole Ruſſian empire, and drinks ſucceſs to Guſtavus. This ſeaman and I were fiſhing together, at the ſame place, about this time, laſt year; when we heard the firing in the engagement between Admiral Kruſe and the Duke of Sudermania, near Cronſtadt. Lieutenant Smith dropped his fiſhing-rod, and pulling up his breeches, which were generally hanging lower than they ſhould have been, haſtened to the ſea-ſhore, inviting me with many vociferous oaths and exclamations to follow him. The cannon thundered in our ears. Smith, holding up his breeches with one hand, demonſtrated to me with the other the ſeveral manœuvres which the Swedes would make to drive the Ruſſian fleet into Cronſtadt. Every ſhot gave freſh vigour to

the lieutenant's eloquence: he thought he ſaw the Ruſſian fleet giving way, the ſignal for chaſe at the Swediſh admiral's main top-maſt, and the maſts and yards of the Ruſſian fleet dropping like the leaves in autumn. He does not, however, ſee at a great diſtance, if I can judge from a circumſtance I am going to relate.

Accuſtomed to ſtormy ſcenes, he is rather awkward in country ſports. He acquits himſelf tolerably in fiſhing, having formerly caught mackerel with a line over the ſtern gallery of the Cleopatra or ſome other Britiſh frigate.

The lieutenant trudges through the woods with me with a fowling-piece. The game was ſcarce, ſo I fixed the ſkeleton of a horſe's head among the branches. I hailed Mr. Smith, and deſired him to approach with ſoft ſteps, leſt the bird ſhould give us the ſlip. With all that anxiety which diſtinguiſhes keen ſportſmen, Smith drew near, with his muſket in full cock, and preſented. He took a good aim and fired. He expreſſed much

much ſurpriſe that the bird neither fell nor fled—it muſt be entangled among the branches. He therefore walked with cautious ſteps, to take hold of it, fearing that, being only wounded, it might ſtill get off. I made the beſt of my way home, to eſcape a volley, which I heard reſounding after me through the foreſt.

The Finland girls come every Sunday to the poſt-houſe with their ſtrawberries. They attend church in the morning; the reſt of the day they range the foreſt for the wild fruit it produces. The lieutenant makes love to them. One of the girls is very beautiful—the contents of her baſket are ſooner diſpoſed of and at a higher price than any of the others. I aſked her if ſhe would have me for her huſband.—She ſmiled, and aſked me if I would purchaſe her ſtrawberries. The want of beard is much againſt me in affairs of gallantry: if I kiſs the girls, they turn it into ridicule, and kiſs the back of their hands, which they ſay is as good as the kiſs of an Engliſhman who has no hair upon his lips. In the week-days the fe-

males are employed in all manner of drudgery both at home and in the field: upon holidays the younger endeavour to procure ſome money in the manner I have noticed, as they receive no other wages than clothes and board from their parents, to whom they are in general ſervants. The patriarchal government ſtill exiſts in many parts of Finland and Ruſſia, unleſs where a tyrant maſter interferes and divides, by ſale, the father from his children. Such inſtances of cruelty, however, ſeldom occur. The landholders ſeldom diſpoſe of any others of their ſlaves than the idle and profligate, who are a burden to the eſtate, which muſt not only maintain them, but pay their taxes; and few landholders will purchaſe ſuch ſlaves, who are often ſold to the army, or ſent in place of the more induſtrious.

This flat country abounding in game, and where there are few incloſures to interrupt the huntſman, invites to rural ſports. I expected to hear the hound and horn awake the morning. I have not ſeen more than one pack of dogs belonging to a nobleman,

bleman, and the woods and plains are ranged only by the ſervants of noblemen, or profeſſional poachers. The Ruſſians are not an indolent people; but ſome athletic exerciſes, common in moſt other countries, are not congenial to their humour. The purſuits of war and of money are their moſt favourite exerciſes. Theſe purſuits are common to all countries, and the principal difference betwixt European and Aſiatic nations is this, that the firſt endeavour to procure money by arts of peace, or by private fraud; the latter by open plunder: the firſt by any method, by any crime leſs than murder; the latter prefer aſſaſſination or war, as the ſpeedieſt courſe to wealth and power.—

Trojan and Grecian differ but in name. P. H.

The breed of horſes ſeems to be particularly attended to in Ruſſia; yet horſe-racing is hardly known. I formerly remarked that the ſtreet ſledges in Peterſburgh were ſometimes drawn by horſes of great value. The Tartars are excellent horſemen: the Ruſſians extremely awkward upon horſeback; yet they delight in their horſes, and in ſhewing

their ſpeed by driving in ſledges. The Ruſſian and the Tartar Coſſac make companions of their horſes; they converſe with them, reprimanding or praiſing them as their *conduct* merits. I have been repeatedly and well informed, that perfectly in the ſame manner the natives of India converſe with their elephants. I have heard a Ruſſian reproach his horſe for a lazy ungrateful raſcal, that, notwithſtanding he had been well uſed, and even received that ſame day a double allowance of oats, he hardly moved with the waggon, and trudged along like a man in irons. The Ruſſian, having worked himſelf into a paſſion, ſeized his horſe by the bridle, and continued beating him without mercy as long as his arm could hold the whip. This Ruſſian was driving two ſledges loaded with hay: he informed the other horſe how he had chaſtized his lazy fellow-labourer, as a warning to him to eſcape the like puniſhment, by laying his ſhoulders to the draught. Their horſes really appear to underſtand the oratory of their maſters: a ſingle word or nod is a ſufficient hint to the

the animal. In the ſtreets of Peterſburgh the ſledgemen are fond of being followed by their horſes. When not employed, they will give a ſignal to the horſe to leave his ſtation, and the maſter walks in great ſtate backwards and forwards with his cavalry in the rear. They frequently, too, deſire the horſes to put their fore-feet in the maſter's hands, which is inſtantly obeyed. The horſes themſelves enter into the humour of this amuſement, and ſhake their heads and tails, expreſſively of their ſatisfaction.

Count Orloff is the only nobleman who is diſtinguiſhed by his attention to, and delight in, the ſports of the turf. He has the fineſt collection of horſes, perhaps, in Europe. Muſcow, the family reſidence of this nobleman, not far removed from Perſia and Turkey, uninterrupted by ſeas, affords him an eaſy conveyance for bringing to his menage the horſes of thoſe countries, and likewiſe of Arabian horſes imported into Turkey. To theſe are added Engliſh blood-horſes. One or more of theſe the Count annually imports from Yorkſhire. The

race-ground has been formed near Mufcow at a confiderable expence. Many of the Tartar princes are refident in Ruffia; not only as hoftages, but as vifitors, and in order to acquire a knowledge of the arts and fciences.

Why are the Ruffians, fo nearly allied to the Tartars in manners, cuftoms, and language, and both of them fo fond of their horfes, fo inferior to the latter in horfemanfhip? The predatory life of the Tartars is not more the caufe of this fuperiority to the Ruffians, than the difference of climate of thefe two nations. Ruffia, covered with fnow fix months of the year, has neceffitated the natives to drive about in fledges: and the Afiatics, and all of Afiatic origin, are *eafily* neceffitated to lie rather than to walk or ride. The Ruffian reclines in his fledge amidft fnow and hail: the Indian in his palanquin under the torrid zone. The Tartar, averfe to trade, is put to more violent exercifes in fearch of a fubfiftence. Tartary, properly fo called, is not covered with fnow for any length of time; and fledges

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are as ill calculated for their country, as for their manner of life.

How fallen the Tartars from their former glory! I allude to their former rank in the peaceful arts, not in war. Thofe plains, the antient fite of elegance and induftry, where proud cities raifed their turrets, and golden harvefts covered the wide expanfe, are now defert waftes. A few fcattered villages and encampments ferve juft to mark the refidence and the exiftence of favages. The Empire of Tartary died of the fame difeafe with Rome; and of feveral empires more antient than Rome: a thirft of conqueft and an overgrown body. The countries where thefe empires once flourifhed, as if it were to ferve for a monument to the difgrace of mad ambition and war, remain deferts. What is Italy itfelf, compared with its antient ftate, but a defert? Affyria and Perfia are one wildernefs, the abode and retreat of banditti, the outcafts of men. The majority of mankind, now wifer, may fave from deftruction nations, which never yet were long preferved by tyrants and their armies.

LETTER XLIII.

Of the Facility of acquiring Languages in Ruſſia.—Of the Ruſſian Bagnios.—Anecdotes of the moſt celebrated Nuns.—Anecdotes of ſome Britiſh Officers.—Anecdote of Paul Jones.—Foundling Hoſpitals.—A new Plan for eſtabliſhing Aſylums for reformed Proſtitutes.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

IF you wiſh to learn half a dozen languages or ſo, this is the beſt ſchool for you to come to. It is not merely the variety of foreigners, ſpeaking an equal variety of tongues, but almoſt every individual ſpeaks three or four different dialects. The very domeſtic ſervants are proficients in languages. The children of the better ranks of Engliſh, Ruſſians, and Germans, converſe at the earlieſt age in theſe ſeveral tongues, and likewiſe in French.

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It would make Domine Lingo himſelf ſtare to hear theſe little proficients. Unleſs in learning the languages grammatically, the children have no teachers but their parents, the ſervants of the houſe, and the company who frequent it. It is diverting enough to ſee and hear the ſervants or others chiding the children in ſeveral languages; and the little creatures weeping, and replying to one in German, to another in Ruſſian, and to a third in Engliſh.

You can always, however, find out the native country of the majority of the company, by liſtening to the prevailing ſounds. How natural it is to ſpeak the language of our infancy! I have always noticed that in the heat of diſcourſe, if one could not make himſelf underſtood in ſpeaking a foreign language, he inadvertently attempted to explain himſelf in his own tongue, without conſidering whether or no a ſingle word of it was comprehended by the party to whom he addreſſed himſelf; and wherever a company all of one nation are aſſembled in a ſtrange land, though they may, from daily habit, converſe with the natives

at times in the language of the country they are in, yet the converſation ends in their native notes; and particularly if the bottle circulates freely, the ſongs and oaths are all of them plain German, or plain Engliſh, as the aſſemblage may be of the one or the other nation.

The grand qualification required here in ordinary ſervants, is, to ſpeak ſeveral tongues: one can hardly find employment as a porter without ſuch knowledge. Nay, a thorough knowledge in the languages is abſolutely neceſſary, if you would viſit the bagnios. You do not know whether the lady of the houſe is a Ruſſian, a Swede, a German, a Dane, an Italian, a French-woman, a Spaniard, a Finlander or a Tartar.

The Grand Signor has a ſelect collection of nymphs from Circaſſia and Georgia at a vaſt expence; but here every common ſoldier or ſeaman, any merchant's clerk, may have a choice from every quarter of the globe. Every thing here is upon the ſame ſcale with the empire.—By variety here we do not underſtand ſimply a va-

riety of women, but a variety of nations. The houſes of *accommodation* are upon the ſame great plan. There are ſeveral houſes in Peterſburgh containing forty and fifty good-natured ladies under each roof. I do not know if it is meant as a compliment to the amorous complexion of the Engliſh, who every foreigner will tell you loves his bottle and his girl, that the moſt extenſive and famous bagnio in Peterſburgh is the *Ville de Londres.*

You will laugh at me for writing the hiſtory of bagnios—Have patience—A traveller muſt overlook nothing. He enters into a compact with himſelf to pick up every thing. He is a rag-gatherer, but for the purpoſe of making a noble manufacture of them.

As the Ville de Londres is the moſt extenſive, the houſe of a Jeweſs contains the moſt ſelect, collection of beauty. Yet, true to her faith, ſhe will not herſelf approach a Chriſtian: ſhe only condeſcends to take his money. Attentive to buſineſs, and poſſeſſing the moſt liberal ideas of trade, ſhe

ſhe carries it on ſyſtematically. During the war, many brave cuſtomers being abſent and money ſcarce, ſhe was rather ſlack during the ſummer months, and had only a few heroes of the counter to pay her an evening viſit: but no ſooner did the fleets return to port, and the army to winter quarters, than this enterpriſing dealer detached a body of petticoat cavalry from the main body to Cronſtadt, Revel, and Wyburg, to welcome the conquering warriors home.

When the carnivals are held upon the frozen river in February, or in the ſtreets in April, the moſt diſtinguiſhed puppet-ſhow is exhibited in the wooden theatre of the Jeweſs. Here, in addition to the nymphs behind the ſcenes, rope-dancers and tumblers afford moſt delectable fun. To invite the crowd, the Jeweſs, with her birds of Paradiſe by her ſide, harangues from an exalted ſituation, to which a ladder enables her to mount, the gaping mobility. She demonſtrates clearly that her exhibitions are worth their money, and

makes ſome comments upon miſers. To the aid of oratory ſhe calls in muſic. She plays a good hand at the cymbals: ſeveral of the ladies in waiting are paſſable upon a drum and a fiddle. I have even witneſſed no deſpicable performance upon the trumpet by a fair trumpeter.

There are very few fair nymphs who keep their houſe and carriage. One or two French ladies are in the firſt ſtyle here. Of theſe, madam Elliot ſays ſhe is of Engliſh parents, and ſhe ſpeaks fluently the Engliſh tongue.

I need hardly mention that a maſquerade is a place of intrigue; but in this country it is a place of the loweſt intrigue. Any one may obtain admittance for half a crown, and of conſequence the company conſiſts of the loweſt as well as the higheſt ranks. The count under maſque dances with his chamber-maid and footman. The ſtricteſt decorum is obſerved, and indeed enforced by the preſence of police officers, who attend not only here, where they are certainly neceſſary, but upon all public oc-

casions, even where the whole of the company are known, and of the most respectable or exalted ranks. If a ball is given at a tavern or public room, whether masqued or no, notice must be given to the police-master of the quarter of the city where the entertainment is to be given, and he dispatches at the usual hour a lieutenant and guard. The custom of the Russians in retaining their carriages and servants where-ever they go, or however long they stay, renders this guard very proper and useful.

In the Russian masquerades, consisting of such a mixture as would undoubtedly be attended with a boxing match every moment, were such an assemblage to consist of Englishmen, there is not even an attempt at disturbance; not merely from awe of the guard, but from natural disposition: and should any person offer the least insult, however great the offender or however humble the offended, the aggressed would find a friend by applying to any person of rank in the company.

At one of these masquerades, I observed

a girl

a girl of the town forwardly intruding herſelf upon ſeveral gentlemen. Fired with her impertinence, one of them pulled off her maſque. The girl directly went to a Ruſſian nobleman who was ſeated at the other corner of the room with ſome acquaintance: ſhe complained of the inſult, and this gentleman, though he ſaw plainly the rank and profeſſion of the petitioner, left his company and went with the diſtreſſed damſel, in ſearch of the diſcourteous knight who had offended her. The offender was a nobleman. This did not prevent an explanation being demanded, and, after mutual laughter at the adventure, the girl was deſired to behave herſelf better in future. The diſappointed nymph did not leave them without beſtowing ſome ſharp language upon both parties. The police officer never takes notice of ſuch occurrences unleſs a complaint be made to him.

Peterſburgh, a new metropolis, is rapidly increaſing in every convenience for the accommodation of vice. Dancing aſſemblies, for the purpoſe of making love bargains,

are as common here as in London. An Engliſh commander of a Ruſſian ſhip of the line told me, that he was placed rather in an awkward predicament in a little adventure with ſome acquaintance at a dancing club. They concluded a treaty with ſome fair partners, and at the concluſion of the ball drove away in ſledges to a bagnio. The Ruſſian bagnios are not conſtructed, as ours are, by the genius of ſuſpicion and privacy. A Ruſſian bagnio contains in every room, as many beds as it can poſſibly find ſpace for. But this is not peculiar to the bagnios, but common to all the lower order of public houſes in Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, as well as Ruſſia; and the reaſon for this, I apprehend, is, that it requires a leſs number of ſtoves.

The captain with his brother officers could have put up with the bagnio as it was: but unfortunately a freſh company of ſtrangers arrived from ſome other dancing aſſembly, and wanted exactly the ſame accommodation. The landlord, as uſual, without ceremony let the remainder of the

beds

beds to the new comers. The captain was chagrined, though he knew the cuſtoms of the country; yet making a virtue of neceſſity, they joined company at ſupper, ſaluted each other's girls, and all went peaceably, in due time, to their chamber.

It is eſteemed a piece of magnificence in Scandinavia when a bed has got curtains. This magnificence is not known in the public houſes.

His Excellency Admiral Paul Jones, whoſe name and Lord Selkirk's ſilver plate will always be remembered together, lodged, at his arrival from the Black Sea, at the Ville de Londres. The admiral being tired of the accommodations which his hotel provided, from the attic ſtories was ſmitten one morning with the beauty of the girl who ſold him milk for his tea. The girl did not exceed ten years of age, and, not being yet initiated in the paths of vice, made every reſiſtance, and forced his Excellency by her ſhrieks to permit her to go away. Her mother made a complaint to the officer of police; and the Admiral, not-

withſtanding his rank, was happy, by the utmoſt intereſt, to get this affair of gallantry ſettled by a preſent of money.

It is reported, that a great perſonage, upon hearing this circumſtance, expreſſed her ſurpriſe that the warrior could not be ſatiſfied with the various eaſy accommodation which her metropolis afforded him.

Houſes of bad fame are not publicly allowed here; but, as in other countries, winked at. The police, as far as they can, diſcourage them, ſince they tend to hurt population in an empire where the inhabitants are ſo thinly ſpread. The Empreſs, as if to make up for her loſs of ſubjects, occaſioned by the ſtews, which never produce any thing but diſeaſe, has erected foundling hoſpitals in moſt of the large cities. Here every father, who cannot afford to marry, may place his children, without any queſtions being aſked. The parents have only to put the child into a box in the wall, and to ring a bell to give notice to nurſery women, who directly come to take out the infant.

Another eſtabliſhment is wanted here as well

well as in all countries: I mean hoſpitals for the reception of ſuch females as wiſh to return to the paths of virtue. I know there are ſome hoſpitals of this nature in England; but they do little ſervice, owing to the inconſiderate plan of their eſtabliſhment.

Women who are led aſtray are of all ranks: ſome poſſeſs the nobleſt qualities of the mind, and are accompliſhed in every reſpect: it is not proper that ſuch women, willing to give over their infamous profeſſion, ſhould be lodged in a common hoſpital, and mixed with the vulgar proſtitutes. The virtuous in high life do not love the ſociety of even the virtuous among the vulgar; far leſs will unfortunate females the ſociety of each other, at a time too when they are inclined to forget each other, and their odious manner of life. Allow that each has a ſeparate apartment, and is waited upon by a ſeparate ſervant: while all deſcriptions are under the ſame roof, ſociety with each other cannot be avoided without complaints from the vulgar, who will

draw no comparifon to their own difadvantage. Their fociety could not much improve each other, and to be entirely alone, is to increafe melancholy, not virtue, in thofe who have been accuftomed to the oppofite extreme of fituation. A number of fmall houfes fhould be purchafed for this ufe, either in the midft of cities or in retired places, as may be moft agreeable to different difpofitions. Thefe houfes fhould not be known by any infcription or mark. They fhould affume the appearance of lodging-houfes: a decent matron with her hufband fhould be appointed to fuperintend not only houfehold affairs, but capable of giving moral inftruction to the lower order of reclaimed proftitutes, and of teaching reading and writing. Or penitents, of the better ranks and characters, might be placed as boarders or penfioners in poor, but creditable, private families. The governors and infpectors fhould examine the minds of the females applying for fuch afylums, and diftribute them according to their merits, or permit them to make their

own choice, and to change their lodging whenever they inclined.

Such a liberal plan as this would be attended with the moſt ſalutary effects. A female having committed one fault would directly have a refuge againſt the reproach of her relations and acquaintance, and ſoon find conſolation in induſtry, and in ſociety that did not ſcorn her. The falſe and cruel prejudice of relations might be overcome upon certificates being ſent of the penitent behaviour and irreproachable conduct of the unfortunate females; and they might again be reſtored to their families, or to the world, in various ſtations, for which their fall and repentance might render them more worthy, than the arrogant virtuous, who have nothing but chaſtity, or perhaps a command of their paſſions, or only the fortunate want of opportunity and ſolicitation, to boaſt of.

LETTER XLIV.

Anecdote of Mr. Wilkes's late Houſe-keeper, now at Peterſburgh.—Anecdote of an Engliſh Dog.—Ruſſians become jealous of Foreigners, and the Cauſe of this.—Anecdote of an Engliſh Gentleman, a Ruſſian Prince, and of Count ——, Governor of Moſcow.

St. Peterſburgh, July 1791.

THERE is but one Engliſh coffee-houſe in Peterſburgh: you will know it by the inſcription over the door "*Anglis Caffé Hous.*" It is kept by a late female domeſtic of the celebrated Mr. John Wilkes; a Frenchwoman by birth. A new cuſtomer is always entertained, along with his *caffé*, with anecdotes of her miſtreſs, Miſs Wilkes, whom ſhe praiſes highly as the very mirror of virtue and all good qualities.

This

This lady, in addition to tea and coffee, formerly the only thing to be had in her rooms, has got a ſtock of rum to make Engliſh punch. She told me, " that ſhe had much difficulty in procuring a licence: that the officers of the cuſtoms would do nothing without extravagant fees: but, continued ſhe, I gave them no reſt, I went every day, and, as they knew me to be an Engliſh woman, I ventured to ſpeak freely to them—I told them that they were a pack of raſcals.—They were frightened, and gave me my licence." Her method of doing buſineſs ſhe informed me was this: " If any " gentleman called for a diſh of coffee or " a glaſs of punch, and *forgot* to pay for it, " ſhe never had any thing in her houſe " when they called again, until they paid " her the old debt."

The moſt prudent people will meet with misfortunes. She had lately a misfortune in a love affair; and, as every perſon becomes her confident immediately on his arrival, ſhe ſtated the matter to me thus: " You have " ſeen that French gentleman by the ſide

"of my fire frequently—he is a moſt un-"grateful fellow. He had from me his "lodgings and board for nothing, *and he* "*was unto me as a huſband.* The fellow," continued this lady, "at laſt began to give "himſelf the airs of a huſband, and to uſe "the freedom of ſcolding and even of beat-"ing me: but I have a good ſpirit, and I "this morning turned the ungrateful dog "down ſtairs." I commended her much for this ſenſible inſtance of executive pow-er, and adviſed her to be more cautious of her next choice; but ſhe is reſolved, no doubt while the marks of the blows remain, to have no more connection with tyrant man.

The Engliſh, and every thing from Eng-land, were, until of late, all in all with the Ruſſians. Even a dog from England would have met with all poſſible patronage. In the gardens of the palace of Zarſko Zelo I obſerved a pillar which I ſuppoſed erected to the memory of ſome worthy. Upon reading the inſcription, I found it contain-ed an epitaph upon an Engliſh dog! This honeſt

honeft maftiff, whofe courage and fidelity had procured him the favour of the Emprefs Catharine II, had been brought to Ruffia by fome fhip-mafter. The dog by the direction of fome good ftar found his way to the court; and, no doubt invited by the fteams from the Imperial kitchen, refolved to lodge there in preference to the dirty crib upon a veffel's deck, and where he could obtain nothing but the tattered relics of the feamen's dinner for his fubfiftence.

This judicious preference marked him born for a courtier; but his other qualities were much fuperior to the ordinary virtues found in levees. He remained at the Court of Ruffia many years; and, if he was known to flatter, by fawning upon his Imperial miftrefs, at leaft he was never known to betray. His epitaph is in fubftance: "That virtue in animals of whatever kind merits reward: That the animal here interred poffeffed the nobleft virtues, courage, fidelity, and ambition: That, unlike the moft part of his countrymen in Ruffia, who arrived in fearch of vulgar commerce, this dog had contempt-

contemptuoufly paffed their houfes, and directly come to court, where he had been treated generoufly, and merited this treatment by long and faithful fervices."

The Ruffian government, nobility, and gentry formerly paid every attention to ftrangers vifiting the country. The ill ufage they experienced in return from feveral ill-natured philofophers in their books of travels, make them now behold travellers as fpies, come to pick up what intelligence they can, with a view to revile them. I have been told very plainly by fome gentlemen to whom I applied for information, that they did not choofe to run the rifk of having their names given as authority, perhaps for more than they had mentioned. I was under the neceffity of having recourfe to every fecret expedient, to procure what I might have obtained in open company, had no illiberal philofopher arrived before me.

The utmoft civility is yet obferved to ftrangers by the higher ranks: but we have loft their confidence. In Peterfburgh, ftran-

gers

gers are as much at home as the Ruſſians themſelves: every perſon here is ſurrounded with his countrymen. It is in the inland cities, where attentions of the natives to ſtrangers are moſt requiſite, that they are moſt paid. Yet, as will happen in other nations, there are, at time, inſtances of incivility from Ruſſians to ſtrangers, and from ſtrangers to Ruſſians.

A young Iriſh gentleman was lately at Muſcow. One night he was preſent at a public maſquerade. In walking through the rooms he inadvertently, in the crowd, preſſed againſt a Ruſſian lady of high quality. The princeſs complained of the rudeneſs; and the gentleman, the moment he underſtood what had happened, went to the lady, and made the moſt ample apology. The princeſs expreſſed herſelf ſatisfied, and the gentleman naturally ſuppoſed this affair ſettled.

A Ruſſian officer, probably ſome dependent of the prince, the huſband of the lady, anxious to ſhew his attachment to the family, baſely encouraged others of the company,

ny, no doubt by miſrepreſenting the matter, to inſult this ſtranger, by crowding about him and ſhewing different ſigns of diſapprobation. The Engliſhman who kept the houſe, adviſed the gentleman to leave the rooms, as it was idle to contend with hundreds—He did ſo, but was followed unperceived by the Ruſſian officer, who in one of the entries leading out from the rooms came behind the Iriſh gentleman, and pulled him down, aſſaulting him in the groſſeſt manner. In this conduct, I am ſorry to add, the officer was not only abetted but aſſiſted by the prince his patron. Every country has ſome nobility to diſgrace it.

The landlord with difficulty reſcued the ſtranger—the prince and officer ran away. The gentleman, not being able to find the delinquents, applied to the governor of Muſcow for redreſs, who readily promiſed that exemplary puniſhment ſhould be inflicted, and demanded to know what ſort of ſatisfaction the gentleman expected. The ſtranger replied, that although the prince and his aſſociate had behaved like ſcoun-

ſcoundrels, he would be ſatisfied with the prince's accepting a challenge to fight him in a duel. The governor ſaid, that ſuch ſatisfaction was not permitted by the laws of Ruſſia, but that he would cheerfully grant any ſatisfaction which theſe did permit.

The ſtranger thanked the governor for his politeneſs, and agreed to accept of an apology, which he wrote down, to be delivered by the prince and the officer in preſence of the company aſſembled at the next maſquerade. The maſquerade was in conſequence of this expected exhibition much crowded. The governor himſelf attended, and the prince and officer, having mounted to the orcheſtra, pronounced from it, in view of all the aſſembly, the apology dictated to them.

The governor added: "Thus will I puniſh
" any one who treats ill any ſtranger. Our
" city and country are not ſo full of foreign-
" ers, that we need drive them from us with
" rudeneſs and inhoſpitality: on the con-
" trary, let us invite ſociety ſo beneficial to

" us,

"us, with kindneſs and reſpect. I am "aſhamed for my country, that perſons of "ſuch exalted rank ſhould not ſhew a bet- "ter example to their inferiors: but while "I have authority, thoſe who will not vo- "luntarily ſhew a good example ſhall be "held up an example at leaſt of the juſtice "of our laws."

Count ———, the governor, deſerves not merely the thanks of his country, but the eſteem of mankind, for ſuch a noble behaviour.

LETTER XLV.

Mr. Coxe's Account of the Finlanders differs from the Accounts given in these Volumes, and the Reasons of this.—Customs and Manners of the Finlanders.—Manufactures.—Finland Marriage.—Love Anecdote.—Reflection upon Marriage-Laws.—Finland Baths.—Their Women appear naked in public.—Lady Mary Montague's Ideas refuted.—Finland Diversions resembling those in Scotland.—Droll Anecdote of the Finland and Livonian Languages.

Ingria, July 1791.

MR. Coxe has given a very different character of the Finlanders from what I conceive to be truth from a long residence among them. " The peasants of Finland," says this gentleman, " differ widely from " the Russian peasants in their look and dress.

" They

"they have for the moſt part fair complex-"ions, and many of them red hair. They "ſhave their beards, wear their hair parted "at the top, and hanging to a conſider-"able length over their ſhoulders." He thinks them more civilized than the Ruſſians, and more neat and cleanly in their houſes and accommodations; and takes notice of their differing in their religion from the Ruſſians, and having, by ſtipulation between Sweden and Ruſſia, many privileges. "How "far theſe circumſtances," continues he, "may render them more enlightened than "the Ruſſians, is a curious queſtion which "cannot be anſwered by us, who continued "in the country ſo ſhort a time."

The Fins under the Swediſh government and the Ruſſian Fins upon the frontiers of Sweden are indeed more wealthy and cleanly than the reſt of their countrymen, and only wear the beard in old age. The numerous ſea-ports and commercial towns upon the Swediſh ſide of the gulph of Finland and that part of Ruſſian Finland adjoining, have long excited in the neighbouring Finlanders

landers a ſpirit of trade, which, notwithſtanding that the lands are not near ſo fertile as the oppoſite provinces of Ingria and Eſthonia, has made the people richer, and of conſequence more cleanly. The Finlanders of Ingria and Eſthonia have the ſame privileges and religion with thoſe of the province of Wyburg, but they have not the ſame opportunities of trading, nor the ſame materials. I ſhall ſpeak of the commerce of Finland in another place. The poverty of the Ingrians makes them more ſervile in their demeanor, as well as more filthy in their habits. The trading claſs of the Fins, who are ingenious enough in the manufacture of various wooden utenſils, afford a proof of the improvement which might be expected from them in a more happy ſituation; where the ſoil and climate, or where commercial intercourſe, invited and encouraged their exertion.

The Finlanders now under the Ruſſian government are, by treaty with their former maſters, exempted from providing recruits for the army and navy. This clauſe had, no doubt, been inſiſted upon by Sweden, in

order to prevent the Finlanders from ferv-ing againft the Swedes. But, as the caufe of every war between Ruffia and Sweden will be attributed by the one party to the other, and as a breach of faith complain-ed of, muft always give the Ruffians a pretext to difpenfe with this treaty, in the prefent war the Finlanders have been draughted for the armies and navies in com-mon with the other fubjects of the empire. This people are naturally timid, and can-not be of much fervice in war. They are unfortunately placed between two fires, two warrior nations; and for this and other fubftantial reafons I wifh the whole nation of Finlanders removed to the Ukraine.

This people live together in villages. Each houfe, of one ftory, is divided into two apartments. The firft is the lumber-room and cellar; the inner room is the family-room, ferving both for bed-room and din-ing-room to all the houfehold. A bench covered with their ordinary clothes is the bed upon which feveral of the family lie naked. It would be difagreeable to lie with a

ſhirt, as the room is ſo warm and the body in a perpetual perſpiration. The ſame benches in the day-time ſerve for chairs and tables. The looms occupy nearly the remainder of the floor; ſo that it is with ſome difficulty any perſon can turn himſelf in their houſes. To each houſe is annexed a back yard containing ſtables for the cattle, and other conveniencies.

I pay frequent viſits to theſe humble dwellings, and converſe with the aged Finlander and his family. In my late excurſions I found the daughter buſily employed in weaving upon the loom her wedding-gown. I aſked her when ſhe was to be married. She had fixed upon her guardian ſaint's holiday for entering into the temple of Hymen. She was much above the tricks practiſed by Ulyſſes's queen, nor did the night unravel what the day began. She plied her fingers nimbly: the ſaint's day was at hand; and ſhe was afraid, that, like the figure of time, if he was allowed to paſs, ſhe might never lay hold of him again. She was a beauty—a ruſtic ſwain was to enjoy all

her charms. Yet how happy her fate! compared with that of Feodorovna, and preferable to that of a ſiſter villager who lately ran away with a Livonian gentleman, an officer in the Ruſſian ſervice, who "having "plucked this fair roſe will ſoon throw it "like a loathſome weed away!" She was tall and elegant in her perſon, of a beautiful countenance, *lighted up with blue eyes.* Her flaxen hair fell in ringlets upon her lovely neck and boſom, and twiſting round them. Innocence awaked her in the morning, and lulled her to ſleep at night. At laſt a cruel ſpoiler came; he promiſed the young girl ſweetmeats and a ſilken dreſs. She followed him to the camp. The diſtracted father haſtened to recover her. The girl was a ſlave to the proprietor of the eſtate, and could not be claimed by a father. The tears of the parent prevailed with his lord to endeavour to obtain the daughter and ſlave. The officer was arreſted, and put in priſon at Wyburg: yet money has again procured him his liberty and his miſtreſs, whom, no doubt, he has purchaſed.

It

It is exceedingly remarkable to find the youth of this nation ſo fair, yet the old people ſo black. This muſt be in a great meaſure attributed to the uſe of the hot baths. The Finlanders generally go to the baths twice a week. The bath is a ſmall wooden building, within which is a ſort of oven filled with round ſtones. Around theſe the fire is kindled, until they have become red-hot; when water is thrown upon them, and the vapour ariſing from thence involves the bathers, who are ſeated upon benches in the ſtate of nature, and occaſions a greater or leſs degree of perſpiration in the patients, according to the quantity of water thrown upon the ſtones. I cannot ſay that I ever ſaw the Finlanders, men and women, bathing promiſcuouſly; but I have ſeen, as often as I paſſed the baths, which are ſituated near ſome well, the women coming out naked from the ſtoves to bring water, even when they are expoſed to be viewed by every paſſenger upon a public road. Their tawny colour, the looſe texture of their bodies, and their ugly viſages, rendered the ſight diſguſting.

I cannot agree with Lady Mary Montague, "that, were it the faſhion for the women to "go naked, the face would be the leaſt no- "ticed." Even the moſt lovely women would loſe in our ſight by appearing too much in it. The face would ſtill be moſt admired. It is the throne of the ſoul; and, however elegant and handſome the ſhape and air of the other parts of the body, nothing but the additional allurements and grace of the eyes and ſmiles, the varied enchantments of a lovely countenance, could fix attention, and command conſtancy and reſpect. The young girls, upon holidays, are frequently ſeen dancing in the ſame manner with thoſe of the ſame age in Scotland. As many as happen to be together, take each other by the hand, forming a half circle; the girl at one end paſſing beneath the arm of the girl at the other, leading all the girls with her, and again returning. All of them thus paſs beneath the arms of the other girls, alternately ſinging and ſkipping as they perform this figure. It would appear to be a ſacred dance, The girl who leads repeats

at each turning ſome words with much ſolemnity: perhaps it is a ſort of prayer, calculated to aſk charity or preſents from the ſpectators. Laſt Sunday, while I was riding upon the ſea-ſhore below Oranienbaum, and oppoſite to the palace of Count Golofkin, where Mr. Whitworth, our ambaſſador, now reſides, about one dozen Finland nymphs were performing the dance before his Excellency's gate. The Scotch highlanders have cuſtoms ſimilar to theſe. In travelling, which they generally do in bands of ten to one hundred people in ſearch of harveſt work in the more ſouthern provinces, they commonly dance upon the public ſtreet of every town they paſs through, to the muſic of the bag-pipe; and they do this with a view of procuring charity from the inhabitants. I have ſeen the Finland women dancing upon the ſtreets of Peterſburgh, ſurrounded by thoſe of their party who did not join the dance, and by others, ſometimes to the muſic of the bag-pipe, but more commonly to their own ſongs. It did not ſeem, however, that they danced to pro-

cure charity, but for amuſement. It is very ſeldom indeed that one is aſked for charity in this country. A Ruſſian lets no opportunity of making mirth eſcape him. A Ruſſian peaſant, carrying a young pig upon his back, came into the ring. The ſound of the bag-pipe and the Finland ſongs did not pleaſe him, or perhaps he imagined that the notes of the pig would anſwer as a firſt fiddle to the concert: he ſhook the ſack in which the animal was confined, and, pinching his ears at the ſame time, added a very new and uncommon melody in vocal performance.

I have not noticed many diverſions peculiar to the Finlanders: they are, in regard to manners and cuſtoms, nearly the ſame people with the Ruſſians. I have ſeen the peaſants in the villages playing at a ſort of *nine pins*; a game common in all the eaſtern coaſt of Britain. Several pieces of ſmall round-ſhaped wood are put, one above the other, upon the ground; two peaſants ſtand fronting each other, at a certain diſtance from this mark, at which, alternately, they throw a ſtick, endeavouring to beat theſe

pieces

pieces down, and to drive them beyond a crofs line drawn upon the ground upon the opposite fide of the mark to him who throws. He who fucceeds in driving the greateft number of pieces beyond the crofs-line gains whatever is depending upon this trial of fkill.—The prize is generally brandy.

Another of the Finland games nearly refembles one in Scotland. An iron ring of a fmall diameter is laid flat upon the ground: a peafant ftanding over it endeavours to caft a fharp-pointed iron bolt fo as to fix it upon this point within the ring. The Scots place the iron ring upon its edge, and drive with clubs or throw balls through it.

The language of the Finlanders has in it many words common to the Scots and Germans. For inftance, kirk, a church, in all the three tongues has the fame fignification; rig, a ridge; kirn a churn, &c.

The Ruffian language, though widely different from all European dialects, except the Polifh, which is of the fame ftock, has feveral words fimilar to the German, Englifh and Scotch languages, as *fiftera*, fifter, &c.

&c. A number of words bearing a ſimilarity to the Latin are likewiſe to be met with in the Ruſſian tongue, as *dom*, a houſe; *more*, the ſea, &c. &c. But inſtead of entering into learned reſearches into the lineal deſcent of languages, and their collateral alliance and connection from the building of Babel, I will give you an anecdote of a chaſte Finland lady. It is curious to obſerve, that, as we find the languages of the moſt diſtant nations having words ſimilar and of the ſame meaning, we ſhall find too in the adjoining provinces words exactly ſimilar bearing a very oppoſite meaning. The word in the Livonian language for money, in the Finland language is a moſt indecent expreſſion. A Livonian gentleman having a debt due to him by a Finlander, called at his houſe when the landlord happened to be from home. This gentleman aſked the landlady for the debt—She bluſhed, and ſtormed at the open inſult—The *laſt favour* was demanded of her, in the preſence of her family!

LETTER XLVI.

The interesting History of Maria Feodorovna, a young Russian Countess.

Ingria, July 1791.

VIRGIN innocence is an inchanted tower: its strength consists more in that awful respect which the sight of it creates in the breasts of virtuous men, than in its innate fortitude. Those breasts which possess no respect for virtue, those men who inherit no regard for honour, are the daring assailants. The charms they employ to break the enchantments, are flattery, falsehood, protestations to the Deity to witness *their love!* The spell succeeds: the tower, with all its gilded turrets, shakes, and tumbles in ruins!

Even men inclined to virtue are tempted to pursue the more successful, though less honourable, path. By seeing daily, the vicious and impudent alone revelling in the arms

arms of beauty and betrayed innocence, they gradually lose respect for that innocence and beauty, which, too often, when solicited with unremitting diligence, or even when rudely assaulted, gives itself up to prostitution. The most virtuous daughter under the care of the tenderest and wisest parent is yet liable to fall a sacrifice to every villain of genteel appearance and address. Why do not our laws empower the father, the mother, or the brother, to plant a dagger in the soul of the destroyer of the peace of their family? But, indeed, unless the present conduct of parents and their relatives is altered, and until they receive the victim under their protection, and forget the fault, they have no title to judge or punish; being themselves destitute of feeling and mercy. Such protection and forgiveness would not encourage vice. To be for ever debarred from the thought of marriage with men of equal rank would be a sufficient punishment: and the law should expressly prohibit marriage with the ravisher, that virtuous women may be enabled at once to

know

know the real intentions of their ſuitors, the moment the leaſt indecent word or action is practiſed by them. Until ſuch laws are made; until parents and relations, and ſociety agree to protect the unfortunate daughter, and to forget the firſt fault and commiſſion of vice, our laws, our relations, and ſociety only bear a name of which they are unworthy.

Let me behold the conſequences of this criminal conduct. A lovely daughter is brought up under the care of, what is commonly called, the fondeſt parents. She is deluded under the promiſe of marriage, or, allow that the deluſion ſucceeded without ſuch promiſe: the fond parents tear their hair and weep bitterly; but they order their daughter to be driven from the houſe. They weep for the diſhonour that has happened to their name; and to cure this diſhonour they ſpread the infamy; they drive out their deſcendent to repeat the crime; and their name becomes known in every bagnio. There are only two ways to ſave the honour of the family thus ſituated; *to continue*

the

the parents of their child, or *to put her to immediate death*. Death would be mercy in comparifon to the difgraceful proftitution fhe muft now fuffer. In her firft outfet fhe is careffed by all thofe lovers who were acquainted with her and her family. Neceffity, fometimes revenge for the bafer treatment of thofe who gave her exiftence, blunts the agony arifing from this fad change! The companions of her father and brothers are familiar with the daughter and fifter. She is deferted, at laft, by all her acquaintance, for fome other lady who has more lately been turned out of her father's houfe: fhe enters the metropolis, and difpofes of her favours to every cuftomer. Shame is now fled; and if fhe boafts of her family to raife her price, one fpecies of mifery fucceeds to another, and the natural confequences of want and difeafe are often anticipated by a voluntary death.

The hiftory of the Ruffian lady to whom I have alluded in my laft letter, is not fo well known as it ought to be. It contains an awfully interefting leffon to parents,

and

and diſplays the fatal effects of a rigorous treatment of their offspring. It was the apprehenſion of a rigorous treatment from a parent of a violent temper that occaſioned the miſeries of Maria Feodorovna. She was a lady of diſtinguiſhed rank and fortune, the only daughter of a nobleman.

During the early period of her life, her education was anxiouſly attended to by the beſt of mothers, whoſe ſoul bore upon it the impreſſion of every noble feeling and virtue. The mother, while ſhe held her favourite daughter before the glaſs, ſaw an exact copy of herſelf in form of body; and the never-ceaſing ſmile upon the cheeks and lips of Maria ſeemed to beſpeak an equally beautiful copy of her mind. This mother died: and the youthful Ruſſian counteſs, from the love and care of her mother, from the polite and elegant round of a court, and from the ſociety of her dear Markoff, who was enraptured with this amiable female, was hurried by the haughty baron to a diſtant eſtate amidſt the wilds of Ruſſia.

Here, ſurrounded with deſerts, nor view-

ing one object that could bring ſome happy compariſon in thought between them and paſt ſcenes, the lovely Maria exhauſted her boſom in ſobs, and watered her pillow with tears.

The ſociety of count Markoff could have lighted up this deſert, and diſpelled thoſe tears. Diſappointed ambition had occaſioned a miſunderſtanding between the two families, and the name of Markoff was forbid even to be mentioned in the houſe of the baron. His fondneſs for his lovely daughter could not overcome his abhorrence of his ſucceſsful rival, the father of young Markoff; nor permit him to entertain the moſt diſtant idea of that connection which he knew was the ardent wiſh of the youthful pair. His brows darkened with rage, when he ſaw one of his blood who wiſhed not deſtruction to the houſe of Markoff.

Maria was kept in perpetual agony by this unfortunate diſpoſition in her parent, yet forced to affect an indifference to all ſhe loved, while ſhe daily drooped and pined in ſilent melancholy.

melancholy. But no affectation could bring back the rofy health which had lately painted her cheeks; and her languid fmiles and action were difeafed copies of that lively manner which had diftinguifhed her in happier days. That innocent mirth, unmixed with care, born in the lap of childhood, and expiring with it, was never again to return. Maria was not even deftined to enjoy that happinefs to which her virtue entitled her. In vain had a mother infpired her with every noble and virtuous fentiment; in vain had nature endowed her with a perfon the model of beauty, and with an exalted foul; in vain had fortune lavifhed riches, extenfive domains, and thoufands of flaves ready to kneel at her feet whenever fhe appeared.—The meaneft of thefe flaves was to poffefs Maria.

Count Markoff, difregarding every dictate but that of love, and the dangers which Maria had reprefented to him as the certain confequence of any attempt to vifit her, left his refidence near Mufcow, and journeyed towards that fpot, which was to give

him an interview with his lovely angel. Difguifed in the habit of a peafant, he arrived within fight of the baron's palace, and faw the roof which contained within it all his heart panted for! The breaft of Markoff until this inftant felt not the idea of difappointment: a foldier, he had been accuftomed to cut his way through every difficult pafs with his fword. The parent of Maria guarded the avenue he was now approaching.

With money he purchafed the fervices of fome perfons who frequented the baron's houfe. He got, by their means, a letter conveyed to Maria. Upon reading this epiftle, love overcame in her too every dictate of prudence; fhe loft recollection of her father's being at that inftant in the houfe; and, hurrying on her cloak, fhe ran down ftairs, and into the fields, then covered with fnow. Her recollection returned—her heart failed within her—her limbs refufed to do their office—fhe ftood trembling before the wintry ftorm! She called to her affiftance a flave; and pretending fome other caufe for her

her illnefs, was affifted to reach her chamber without the knowledge of the awful parent who had occafioned her diftrefs.

Maria, overcome with grief, and now giving up every thought of viewing her beloved Markoff, funk upon her bed in fits of defpair and madnefs. Reafon again refumed her feat: a letter was difpatched to Markoff at a neighbouring village, defiring him, as he valued his own and her life, to leave the place, and return to Mofcow, where there might be ftill a poffibility of their meeting. Having figned and fealed this letter, fhe held it in her hands, without knowing what fhe did. She broke the feal of her letter, and, feizing the pen, gave that utterance it afforded to her paffion; and amidft the effufions of ardent love fhe mentioned the attempt fhe had made to fee him.

Markoff's bofom could not contain the emotions of his foul on reading this letter. The cool, prudential, firft part was overturned by the concluding poftfcript.

Maria ftood at the window, looking towards the village. "No," faid fhe to her-

ſelf, " he muſt not come.—I have forbid " him, as he values my life. Let me en- " deavour to compoſe myſelf. Having re- " ſolved, and executed my reſolve by that " letter, that we muſt wait for a happier " period, why this fever of deſire in my " ſoul yet to behold him? I will avert my " eyes from the village—Oh, how I ſhake! " —Can he love me, and obey my man- " date? Will he not ſtand upon that ſnowy " plain, and wave his handkerchief? The " village is ſurrounded with woods—can " Markoff be gone without making me " one ſignal of love! Ungrateful man! " No! no! no! Where am I? Did I hear " him ſpeak? Maria! Markoff!"

The night cloſed: the diſtracted Maria walked in her chamber, ſtill ſearching through the gloom for Markoff—ſtill wiſhing to ſee, not him, but rather ſome friendly ſpirit bearing his ſhape and air. A peaſant near to the windows held out a letter.—Maria anxiouſly enquired, but with a ſoft voice, from whom it came. It was the count Markoff himſelf! " Where is the count?" ſaid

Maria; and ſtretched out her hand for the letter. "My Maria!" replied the count; and laying hold of the branches of a tree which ſtood near the window, he climbed up, and entered it.

The young lady ſtared wildly at him, unable to reſiſt or to ſpeak. He aſſured her, he would inſtantly depart, when he had once more impreſſed upon her lips the ſeal of love. He threw his arms eagerly around her, and held her to his panting breaſt.—The hours glided away unſeen; nor were they awakened from their dream, but with the ſteps of the baron approaching to the chamber door. The imagination of a woman, which is ever quick, either to her relief, or to her deſtruction, ſuggeſted to Markoff to hide himſelf in an empty cheſt, which happened to be in the room. The baron's viſit was to enquire, as he often did, after his favourite child; as he had heard ſomething of her indiſpoſition. At times, when the recollection of the family of Markoff was loſt, he behaved as a fond fa-

ther, but this dreadful recollection was never lost for a day's continuance.

The baron left his daughter, without the least suspicion of the presence of the son of his rival.

LETTER XLVII.

The Hiſtory of Maria Feodorovna concluded.

Ingria, July 1791.

MARIA approached the fatal cheſt. She opened it. The count was aſleep, or affected to ſleep. He was aſleep, to wake no more! The head of the cheſt had been, in a hurried moment, ſhut cloſe upon him, or had fallen ſo. There remains no doubt that the count, upon feeling the inconveniency, and want of air, could have relieved himſelf, and perhaps had gently attempted to do it; but finding his attempt attended with ſome noiſe, which might have betrayed a woman whom he valued more than life, to the rage of a father, he had ſubmitted to death.

It is impoſſible for the imagination to conceive the ſituation of Maria when ſhe

found the lifeleſs corpſe of Markoff! She continued for ſome time to believe that the count was affecting ſleep, and reproached him for playing the fool. At laſt ſhe pulled him with ſome violence and anger: the body fell again into the cheſt. She ſcreamed; and fortunate would it have been had the baron heard this cry of horror. Dreadful as her ſituation was, the idea of her father's wrath added to her miſery. Mad with agony, ſhe claſped the body of the count, calling upon his name, and, at calmer intervals, uſing every endeavour to reſtore him to life in vain.

The ſilence of the night was diſturbed with the ſighs, the ſhrieks of Maria, now reclining upon the corpſe, now at her window tearing her hair, and imploring Heaven to end her exiſtence. The morning began to dawn—ſhe rouſed from her diſtracted melancholy, and thoughtful of what the light of day and her furious father were to diſcover. The ſlave who is appointed watchman to every houſe throughout Ruſſia is the only perſon readily to be procured during

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the night, and is generally an elderly man. He is employed in the meaneſt offices during that part of the day not allotted to ſleep.

To this wretched domeſtic, whoſe lodging is a ſort of crib within the gates, the unfortunate Maria applied. The ſlave at her coming kneeled, and touched her ſhoe with his forehead, craving her protection. She deſired him to riſe, and informed him he ſhould have it, as well as a ſum of money, if he would keep a ſecret, and faithfully ſerve her: ſhe diſcovered her misfortunes, and deſired that he would remove the corpſe, and bury it in the adjoining foreſt. The ſlave felt a conſequence he had never felt before. She gave him money, but he knew that the baron would give him more to betray her. That ſlave, who but a moment before had never dared to look up to the daughter of his lord, and who was accuſtomed to eſteem both as deities, on whom his all, his very life depended: that wretch, who was happy to find a bed in the corner of her father's ſtable, and daily receiving chaſtiſement from the care of his furly maſter and fellow ſervants,

vants, who look down upon the watchman, as an inferior being, dared at once to form a wiſh to poſſeſs the perſon of Maria! He began, without much ceremony, to uſe freedom with the counteſs. Overpowered as ſhe was with deſpair and grief, ſhe ſtruck the villain: for a moment ſhe forgot her ſorrows, and, reſuming the dignity of her rank, ſhe bade him begone. But it was too late: the ſlave knew her ſecret, nor was there any other aſſiſtant to be had. The villain knew this; and, pretending to go to the baron to inform him, Maria called him back. He obeyed with ſullen importance. He took the ſilver and gold trinkets which ſhe now added to the firſt preſent—he followed her towards her chamber—he ſtopped ſuddenly, and ſwore that if ſhe did not inſtantly ſubmit to his embraces, he would directly acquaint the baron with all. Maria, in her turn, fell upon her knees to the ſlave: ſhe entreated and beſought him, with every ſoothing expreſſion, and with a promiſe of freedom and wealth. She held by the ſlave, while he endeavoured to rid himſelf

himſelf in order to proceed to the baron's bed-room. She fainted in the ſtruggle to detain him.

The villain turned, beheld his prey, and ſeized upon it.

The ſavage reſorted to the chamber, where lay the corpſe of Markoff. He carried it to the woods, and, cutting the throat, and otherways disfiguring it, left it a prey to animals leſs ferocious than himſelf.

Maria awoke to a new ſcene of woe. The baron obſerved the melancholy brooding upon her mind, and gueſſing that the cauſe related to the deteſted family of Markoff, abuſed her with his uſual rudeneſs. The diſtreſſes of this ill-fated lady were not to end here. The ſlave renewed his addreſſes, and with the ſame threats of informing the baron, adding, that he would accuſe her of the murder of the count.

Maria, as yet guiltleſs, committed a fault unbecoming of her rank and innocence: but the accuſation againſt her is ſolely for the want of fortitude. A crime once committed, appears leſs hideous: this lady had

as yet committed none; but ſhe knew of her diſgrace, and felt herſelf degraded, and, in her own eyes, an outcaſt of ſociety. The ſlave not only threatened to accuſe her of murder, but of proſtitution with Count Markoff. He threatened to expoſe her proſtitution with himſelf as voluntary on her part, and the price of ſervice and ſecrecy.

Maria might have perhaps got over the dread of her father's wrath; but the accuſation of murder and proſtitution, not merely to the count, but to the vileſt of her father's domeſtics, was a ſtumbling-block that ſhe had not ſtrength to paſs. It is always dangerous to imagine ourſelves paſt recovery in any ſituation. To avoid a public, ſhe ſubmitted to a private ſhame. Familiarity made the ſlave now inſolent: he forced her even to come to his wretched hovel, and diſmiſſed her with contempt. Nay, he grew tired of her, and ſought how he could ſell her favours to others.

He forced her, by repeating the former threats, to receive whomſoever he brought to her bed. Here one is apt to loſe all pity

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for this lady. It will be urged that her ſecret was now betrayed to others, and ſhe had no longer the apology juſt mentioned for ſubmitting to proſtitution. But the ſlave found little difficulty in perſuading her, that his friends would keep the ſecret as well as himſelf; or, if ſhe had little faith in this, the chance of their keeping it ſhe preferred to the certainty of its being inſtantly told by her ſavage tyrant, if ſhe refuſed to comply.

The wretched Maria never again beheld with a ſmile the morning dawn. Her eyes dejected, her colour pale; ſhe ſtarted from her glaſs, and, throwing her clothes careleſsly about her, ſhe ſupported with pain, while with her father, the appearance of eaſe and happineſs.

To multiply his gains, the ſlave was not always ſatisfied with the admiſſion of only one viſitant at a time. He dragged her to ſome neighbouring cottage, where were generally aſſembled, at the dead hour of night, ſeveral of the wealthy inhabitants of the country. The hour arrived when Maria

was to be freed from contamination; and it muft be fuppofed that fhe had before entertained the idea of extricating herfelf, and that this idea had fupported her finking mind, and had prevented her too from freeing herfelf by fuicide. Reflection had painted the fhameful courfe that fhe walked in, and fhe faw no end to her forrows. The pride of rank, roufed with repeated infult, determined upon revenge. Female nature yet revolted, and fhe allowed feveral opportunities to efcape.

The brutal ravifhers formed themfelves into a club. Maria was the facrifice at their feafts, and was treated with every indignity which drunken appetite could incite.

The moment of vengeance at laft comes. Her tyrants, overwhelmed with liquor, flept upon the benches of the cottage. Maria faw, and her good angel approved the period of freedom and juftice. She trembled as fhe approached the flave. She invoked Heaven to give her refolution, and, pulling the knife from the belt of the favage, plunged it into his heart. Her forti-

tude rekindled with the ftroke. She proceeded on to the other villains, who belched their drunken fumes in their flumbers, and planted a dagger in every breaft.

Maria had no fooner completed the work of vengeance, than fhe fled home. She beheld from her windows the rifing fun, and fhe imagined herfelf a new being in a new world! "Markoff," faid fhe to herfelf, "will "be here! Thefe are the Elyfian fields: "I will go out and meet him." She wandered in the foreft which covered his body. She knew the fpot, and kneeled upon his tomb. Her voice denied utterance: her tears watered his grave, and fhe ftrewed upon it her flaxen hair. Still awed by her father, fhe concealed from him her forrow, and affected eafe and mirth.

The idea of having committed murder often threw her into fits of defpair. She thought to eafe her confcience by making a confeffion to her prieft. The aftonifhed prieft had never witneffed fuch a confeffion. The wretch betrayed the fecret to his wife.

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The minions of *justice* were ſoon in ſearch of Maria. The relation ſpread throughout all the empire. Her Imperial Majeſty, having ordered a ſtrict examination into the particulars, acquitted this unfortunate lady, and took her under her immediate protection.

Tired of life, now that her ſhame was public, ſhe would have preferred death to all other protection. She begged the Empreſs to allow her to retire to a monaſtery; and here, ſecluded from a world where ſhe found no reſt, ſhe endeavours to forget all but her God and her Markoff. Her cell is ſmall but neat. A few religious books compoſe her library. The picture of Markoff hangs upon her lovely boſom.—She calls it her ſaint, and kiſſes it with fervent devotion. Her firſt office in the morning is prayer: ſhe then goes to the bath, and repeats this in the afternoon. She ſeldom wanders beyond the monaſtic walls; or, if ſhe does, ſhe traverſes the gloomieſt wood, or ſits by a rivulet which encircles her abode; and here, with folded arms and

downcaſt

downcaſt eyes, implores the forgiveneſs of Heaven. The evening bell, the ſhepherd's evening horn, warns her to return to prayers and repoſe.

This ſtory, however romantic it may appear, is yet authenticated beyond all doubt, and is generally believed and known to be true in Ruſſia. Let thoſe who doubt it, recal to mind what wonderful viciſſitudes are common in nations of Aſiatic origin, cuſtoms and manners, and living under the capricious influence of deſpotic governments.

LETTER XLVIII.

Deſcription of the Palace of Zarſko Zelo.—Imperial Baths.—Gardens.—Statues.—Obeliſks, &c.—City of Sophia.—Anecdote of M. Samboriſki, a Ruſſian Clergyman.—Schemes for the Improvement of Agriculture.—Anecdote of the Empreſs Catharine II. and of the Grand Duke.

St. Peterſburgh, Auguſt 1791.

THE climate of this province is not ſo ungrateful as generally repreſented; nor the ſoil, were it properly cultivated. If the ſummer is ſhort, the proceſs of nature in vegetation is equally ſo. I ſhould wiſh to ſee the neighbourhood of Peterſburgh turned into a garden, which it might eaſily be from the cheapneſs and plenty of manure, and from ſo near and ſo good a market. The extenſive foreſt ſurrounding this metropolis

is

is ornamented with many palaces and noblemen's villas: the banks of the Neva are gilded with ſparkling turrets upon all ſides. The ſavage natives of the woods have retreated; the bear and the wolf are ſeldom ſeen here. Sometimes in winter they viſit their ancient abodes, and howl vengeance at man for depriving them of thoſe bleak regions.

The road to the palace of Zarſko Zelo lies through this foreſt, and runs twelve miles in a ſtraight line from Peterſburgh, forming a ſpacious avenue, at the end of which you aſcend a ſmall hill. From the top of this height there is a fine view of the ſurrounding provinces of Ingria and Carelia, thickly ſpread with woods. In ſummer their tops repreſent a rich carpeting; and, if you pleaſe, the villages, the furniture of this extenſive drawing-room; the azure ſky, the ceiling.

The Imperial palace of Zarſko Zelo itſelf, which I ſee at a diſtance of five miles, looks like a bird-cage placed upon the carpet. Such are the ideas of earthly

magnificence, where heaven appears in the ſame *landſcape*. The palace of Zarſko Zelo is ſituated in the midſt of a wood, which is cleared away only to make room for the palace and its gardens. The ſituation is by no means favourable. Peter had no doubt made choice of this ſpot to be near, and at the ſame time out of ſight of, a city, which had given him ſo much trouble, and the advantages and glory expected from it at that period, ſo uncertain. The palace, as it is now, or rather was lately, was furniſhed by the Empreſs Elizabeth. Catharine II. has made the moſt ſuperb improvements. It is in front 1200 feet: the breadth and height bear no proportion to the length; having only one range of ſingle apartments, and the windows ſmall and narrow. In the weſt wing are the apartments of her Imperial Majeſty; in the eaſt wing thoſe of the Grand Duke and family. The original architect, as if to dazzle the eye, and to draw it from an exact obſervance of his defects, has gilded not only the moſt part of the inſide, but

the moſt part of the outſide walls. There is however a grandeur, ſomething which bids defiance to the niceties of taſte, and which marks this palace the ſeat of majeſty and empire. I imagined myſelf again reading the Arabian Nights Entertainments; while I wandered through a labyrinth of magnificence, ſome of the rooms lined entirely with amber, lapis lazuli, agate, and jaſper; others wainſcoted with looking-glaſs; even the floors ornamented with precious ſtones, thrown into different figures, and reſembling the moſt elegant carpeting.

The grand dining-room is, perhaps, the largeſt in Europe. The Empreſs might entertain here ſome of the German princes with all their army! The gallery, a new building, is connected with the weſt wing of the palace; the promenade upon the top is incloſed with glaſs frames, which afford protection from the encroachments of the gnats in a ſummer evening: and the roof, thrown over all, open at the ſides, admits the light, and is a ſhelter from the ſcorching beams of the ſun. Without the en-

clofed promenade in the centre, is another around it in the open air. Adjoining to the gallery are the Imperial baths, the rooms of which are wainfcoted with agate, jafper, and lapis lazuli, and the baths fitted up with every decoration and convenience. The modern elegance of the gallery and baths forms a ftriking contraft with the ancient fplendour of the old palace. I like this contraft. There fhould be fomething more in the palaces of princes than the invention of yefterday. I cannot feparate the idea of a palace from Gothic turrets, and high founding halls. The recollection that the palace itfelf is not ancient is the only caufe that we at firft find fault with the Gothic appearance of it, and efpecially as the architect has contrived to make it a very bad imitation of the Gothic ftyle, neither ancient nor modern. The village of Zarfko Zelo fhould be razed. This is too near the palace, which at prefent is only the largeft houfe in the village, and the Imperial caravanfera is too nearly affociated with the huts of plebeians. Confidering the flatnefs of

of the ground; without any river, and with woods confifting only of barren pine, and birch-trees of a diminutive fize, it is wonderful to find fuch beautiful gardens and pleafure grounds. Catharine is the enchantrefs, who with the magic wand of wealth and power makes rivers to flow in the defert; hills to rife amidft plains, and fruits and flowers to cheer the gloomy wildernefs. Here are fine pieces of water, procured at an incredible expence; iflands whofe fhores were formed with the fpade; and upon thefe, and other parts of the gardens, pillars, obelifks, and triumphal arches, to commemorate the glorious fucceffes of Ruffia, and of thofe heroes and patriots who have diftinguifhed themfelves in the fervice of their country. Over the pieces of water are thrown bridges of marble and granite. In the lakes is a fmall Imperial navy of pleafure-boats, elegantly built and gilded: yet this collection, fmall as it is, is greater, both in number and fize, than the original navy of Peter I. which in the beginning confifted of one yawl!

Here Catharine ſometimes ventures upon the faithleſs deep of which herſelf was the creator; yet, to conſole her mighty mind, ſhe hears the thunder of her fleet at Cronſtadt.

Beſides the obeliſks, and ſtatues, and *grey ſtones*, raiſed to the memory of heroes, in the gardens, there is a fine collection of ſtatuary in a ſmall building, called the grotto. Here amidſt gods and goddeſſes is ſeated Voltaire in a chair of ſtate. The gods and goddeſſes ſeem to be attending his levee, and Voltaire, for the firſt time, ſeems to liſten to the gods. In walking through the pleaſure grounds the eye is agreeably ſurpriſed with a view of a Chineſe village, ſituated upon the ſkirts of a foreſt. I looked behind me to ſee if I had paſſed the great wall. It is built after a model ſent from China. When finiſhed it will add much to the artificial beauties of this Imperial reſidence, and is intended for the accommodation of the court during Her Majeſty's ſummer expedition to Zarſko Zelo. One ſtill finds fragments of the old Dutch ſtyle in the gardens, which, how-

ever,

ever is gradually rooted out by the modern gardener, and nature copied in its ſtead. The ſummer theatre ſtands in the gardens; and here, amidſt a wilderneſs, the Tragic and Comic Muſes ſtrut their hour upon the ſtage.

Without the boundaries of the pleaſure-ground is ſituated the new city of Sophia. Only a few houſes are yet built, and the firſt built houſe, as in all religious kingdoms, was the church, a very elegant edifice. I muſt give you an anecdote of its prieſt. M. Samboriſki, the pariſh prieſt of Sophia, is chaplain and confeſſor to His Imperial Highneſs the Grand Duke. This gentleman was formerly many years in England chaplain to the Ruſſian embaſſy, and likewiſe accompanied the Grand Duke in his travels through Europe. While M. Samboriſki reſided in England, he made agricultural affairs his particular ſtudy, and ſince his arrival in Ruſſia every ſcheme for the advancement of agriculture has either originated with this gentleman, or the ſchemes of others have been ſubmitted to his conſideration

ſideration and management. He has a conſiderable farm of his own, and the management not only of the Grand Duke's eſtates, but of thoſe of various noblemen, who are anxious to ſhow examples of agriculture and induſtry to their vaſſals. He alſo ſuperintends the education of young Ruſſians who ſhow a taſte for farming, and has ſeveral Engliſh farmers engaged at the different eſtates near Peterſburgh. I have had many converſations with this truly uſeful ſubject, whoſe purſuits and labours will tend ſo greatly to promote the real intereſts of the empire. M. Samboriſki complained to me that, notwithſtanding he did every thing in his power to encourage and reward merit and induſtry in Engliſh perſons, chiefly thoſe who come annually from Yorkſhire with horſes for ſale, they frequently gave themſelves up to drunken habits, and, ſurrounded by peaſants altogether ignorant of farming, ſoon conceived too high ideas of their own importance to obey him, or even to do much for themſelves. Thus he has been at much trouble to no

purpoſe.

purpofe. But this ought to point out to M. Samborifki to alter the mode of employing them. If he would eftablifh them in farms of their own, upon the fame plan as in England, and make them depend upon their own induftry, the Ruffians and Fins, bred under fuch farmers, would foon repay the landlords, who, in confideration of having their peafantry taught the art of agriculture, had granted farms at a trifling rent, and advanced money to the foreign colonift.

M. Samborifki was the firft prieft, and I believe is yet the only one, in Ruffia who has ventured to fhave himfelf. This ftep has drawn upon M. Samborifki the indignation of all the monks; among whom are dignitaries the higheft of the church, and who confider the clergy who are allowed to marry as much inferior to them in holinefs. But, now that the paftor of Sophia has fhaved himfelf, he is looked upon as an apoftate. At the confecration of Sophia-Chapel, M. Samborifki was pufhed from the altar by the monkifh archbifhop,

as unworthy to take the charge of ſouls. I have heard it reported that, even when the Grand Duke led M. Samboriſki to the altar, the archbiſhop ſtill puſhed him back; and that, at this inſtant, Her Imperial Majeſty joined her illuſtrious ſon; and theſe illuſtrious perſonages, leading M. Samboriſki to the altar, by their preſence and determined conduct awed the archbiſhop into compliance. This was a fatal blow to the ſilly bigotry of the monks; and as I can notice ſome young men intended for the church beginning to ſhave, it is probable that the beard will not be much longer one of the articles neceſſary for ſalvation in the Greek litany.

LETTER XLIX.

Defeat of the Swediſh Fleet—Swediſh Priſoners of War.—Meanneſs and Folly of the Life and Occupation of Military Mercenaries.—Swediſh and Ruſſian Uniforms.—Armorial Bearings.

Ingria, Auguſt 1791.

AS you ſeem to poſſeſs great curioſity to know the naval tranſactions of this country, I ſhall reſume that ſubject. The defeat obtained laſt naval campaign by the Ruſſian over the Swediſh fleet was one of the moſt complete that was ever gained. The crews of the ſhips of war who had been captured were ordered into the inland parts of Ruſſia.

I ſaw a party of two hundred marines and ſoldiers of the king's guards as they marched paſt from Oranienbaum where they had been

been landed. Their officers arrived the ſame day in cabitkas, or covered carts.

The Swedes are, in general, fine-looking men, and in a greater degree than even the Ruſſians falſify the account given of the northern nations by Buffon. The common ſailors and ſoldiers, who marched on foot, had ſome muſic with them, to cheer them in their captivity: they learned that the poſt-houſe was occupied by an Engliſhman, and they gave us an Engliſh tune. The uniform of the ſoldiers is blue, as is that of the officers both naval and military. The naval officers' dreſs a good deal reſembles the Spaniſh habit: a ſhort jacket more or leſs embroidered with gold, with gold epaulets upon each ſhoulder, and trimmed in different parts with yellow. Their breeches and waiſtcoats were likewiſe yellow. The military officers wore longer coats, and ſometimes epaulets of puffed cloth ſtriped with ſilver or gold lace. Their hats were entirely in the Spaniſh ſtyle, and decorated with white or yellow plumes and

yellow

yellow cockades. The white feathers ſeemed to be worn only by general officers.

I received from a captain of a-line-of battle ſhip a plan of the late engagement. He was ſo kind as to draw it for me, after I had ſupped with him and his brother officers. They told me that they knew all Engliſhmen to be their friends, and to wiſh them ſucceſs. They converſed with me freely as with a confidential ſecretary.

We had not a ſufficiency of beds. The officers of the body guards of Guſtavus III, many of whom were decorated with his orders of nobility, lay upon the floor of my chamber, and of the other rooms. I offered my bed, but they politely declined my offer. —This was a picture of war.

One of the officers retired in penſive mood to the window, while the others ſlept. He had taken from his trunk a muſical inſtrument reſembling a guitar. The Swediſh muſic is not the moſt charming; but at this inſtant I felt ſenſations which no concert ever gave me. This gentleman accompa-

nied the inſtrument with his voice:—the air was ſoft and melancholy. He ſtopped ſuddenly, ſurveyed his companions, and then threw himſelf down upon his mattraſs, beſide them.

The officers were attended by a Ruſſian lieutenant, who ſaw every thing provided for them with regard to travelling equipage; but the priſoners paid for their own proviſions, being allowed a proper ſum from the Empreſs.

Admiral Leanker arrived in a chaiſe from Revel. He ſlept at the poſt-houſe: but previouſly to his going to bed, he ordered one cup of coffee to be prepared for him in the morning, aſking at the ſame time how much it would coſt. He is a little man; has a ſharp look; and his noble conduct in action obliges me to forget his anxiety againſt impoſition in the price of a cup of coffee. No trait however of ſuch characters ſhould ever be omitted. His ſhip was taken after a long chaſe and conteſt. The crew of Admiral Leanker's ſhip, and of another brought into Revel,

Revel, were ſent up the country, under the guard of a troop of Coſſacs. Theſe depredators, having had few opportunities of plunder, reſolved to make the moſt of their convoy; and, having detached a party before the main body, purchaſed proviſions, and retailed them to the Swedes, at an advance of 50 per cent. Nay, they ſold to their priſoners the water from the Ruſſian wells. This new branch of commerce was ſoon put a ſtop to by an expreſs from the court, to whom it was intimated by the Ruſſian officer, who was not able to reſtrain the rapacity of thoſe thieves.

The Swedes expreſſed much uneaſineſs at their being ſent into the inland country, as they apprehended inſults from the lower orders of the natives.

Baron Roſemberg, who was taken priſoner laſt campaign in Finland, and has ſince reſided in Peterſburgh, took poſt-horſes lately in his way to Sweden; a cartel for the exchange of priſoners being ſettled. The Baron is a young man, and, as many of the Swedes do, ſpeaks Engliſh. Since

princes are ambitious enough to go to war, and their ſubjects fooliſh enough to cut each other's throats in diſputes which ſeldom concern them, I think, were I an officer, I ſhould take the firſt opportunity of being made a priſoner, and moſt cheerfully accept my enlargement even upon the hard condition of not having the liberty to have my head ſhot off for my king during the war. I ſee you bluſh at the ignoble idea, and hear you harangue upon the pride, pomp, and circumſtance of battle. Do not forget a ſingle circumſtance, and this will bring you again to your ſenſes :—the wounded and dying—the crowded hoſpitals—the famiſhed ſoldiers—the innocent citizens deſtroyed with their families and houſes during a ſiege—the ſhrieks of murder—the cries of wives and daughters polluted by the conquering heroes, or, perhaps, toſſed upon the ends of their bayonets, and their bodies hewn in pieces with ſabres!

The Ruſſian nobility and gentry have treated the brave Wachmieſter, taken by admiral Greig, in a manner worthy of ſo great

a hero, and of a generous nation. If the Ruſſians encourage privately thoſe of the Swedes who do not fight for their King, at leaſt they approve publicly of thoſe who do. I have particularly obſerved the ſtature and figure of the Swedes, and five or ſix thouſand have paſſed before me of their ſoldiers and ſeamen, a mixture, no doubt, from every part of Sweden. This ſecond view has confirmed me in my former ſtrictures upon M. Buffon, who would repreſent the northern nations as a race of decrepid pigmies. The Swedes are juſt ſuch a mixture as the other nations of Europe preſent. Their fair hair is their chief diſtinguiſhing trait.

We had laſt year in the neighbourhood an encampment of the horſe guards, upon their march to Oranienbaum, where they were ordered as an additional defence of that out-poſt. The uniforms of the guards are blue and gold; thoſe of the officers are very richly embroidered. The uniform of the Ruſſian infantry is green turned up with red; red waiſtcoat and breeches. The artil-

lery have ſcarlet uniforms; the huſſars, blue. The Ruſſian naval uniform is a white coat, turned up with green; white waiſtcoat and breeches. The uniform of inferior naval departments, as the officers of the dock-yards, &c. is a green coat, turned up with white. The officers of police have various uniforms; thoſe of Riga, Revel, and Peterſburgh, blue faced with white or black. The Ruſſian cockade is white. The Coſſack troopers, which form the principal irregular force of Ruſſia, are generally dreſſed in blue; but, except the officers, none can be ſaid to wear uniforms; and even the officers are little diſtinguiſhable from the common men.—The ſuperior commanders alone have embroidered, and other ornaments of dreſs.

The Ruſſians, claiming a title to the Turkiſh dominions, have probably adopted the Turkiſh uniform, which is the ſame in colour; and the ſpread eagle, too, may have ſome reference to the Roman eagle; the preſent Turkiſh provinces in Europe having once formed a part of the Roman empire. Or was the eagle aſſumed by Ivan I.

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and II. when they extended their dominions, and ſtretched out their talons from Muſcow to Kamtſchatka? But though the eagle happens to be emblematical of the ambition of the ſovereigns who have, or who ſtill aſſume it, the Ruſſian, the Auſtrian, and the Pruſſian, and who ſtill continue to throw out their talons upon neighbouring kingdoms; yet the ſimple *fleur de lis* of France ſhews, that a nation may be very ambitious, even with a cabbage-leaf quartered in their ſtandards.

LETTER L.

Peace between Ruſſia and Sweden.—Rejoicings on that Account.

St. Peterſburgh, Auguſt 1791.

I HAVE, at your deſire, reverted to events, of which, you rightly obſerved, I had not in my letters taken proper notice at the time when they paſſed, and of which, I may add, I can now give a better account: But, before I proceed to any farther accounts of engagements and victories, I ſhall, for the ſake of varying this correſpondence, mention ſome circumſtances relating to their conſequence, the return of peace.—On the concluſion of this, there was great public rejoicing.

The gala days commenced on a Sunday. I went early in the morning to take a walk through the city to view the feſtival. The ſquare in which ſtands the equeſtrian ſtatue of Peter the Great was filled with troops, ſurrounding the effigies of their emperor. The ſtatue ſeemed to be inſpired

ſpired with life. The blaze of arms, the martial ſounds of the drum and trumpet, ſaluted my ears, as I went to the palace. The ſtreets were lined with infantry: and, juſt as I arrived, the foot guards were marching into the ſquare before the palace; the grenadier companies, crowned with nodding plumes, leading the way. One of theſe regiments, which had particularly diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the war, was received, as it paſſed by the others, with military honours.

Catharine, from her windows, beheld her troops returned from battle. Upon the oppoſite ſide of the palace, the galley fleet lay at anchor in the river, with all their flags and pendants diſplayed from every maſt and yard. The wind blew ſtrong from the weſtward, the flags ruſtled in the ſtorm. Among the galleys, thoſe of the admiral Prince of Naſſau, and of the Chevalier de Litta, ſecond in command, were moſt diſtinguiſhed by their decorations. The decks of all the veſſels were crowded with ſoldiers and ſeamen. Vaſt multitudes of the

citizens were collected together upon the banks of the Neva, to view the fleet; and another concourfe, equally numerous, attended in the grand fquare to fee their fovereign, who, as foon as divine fervice was ended, came into the balcony, attended by the ladies of the court. Catharine bowed to her fubjects, who made the air ring with their fhouts.

Medals ftruck to commemorate the peace were thrown amidft the crowd by two heralds on horfeback. A *feu de joie* was fired by the guards, and from them ran along the line of troops to the moft diftant parts of the city. The cannon from the admiralty fired at the fame time, and immediately afterwards the whole galley fleet faluted the fovereign and fubjects with their thunder, and with repeated broadfides. This awful peal awakened the attention of the people, who were fcrambling for the medals. This immenfe body, crufhed together towards the river, were now involved in clouds of fmoke, mixed with the continual flafhes from the mouths of the cannon. The

wind

wind at intervals difperfed the fmoke, and difcovered the numerous fhips and pendants; the whole giving a lively idea of thofe battles in which they had been lately engaged.

In the evening the galley fleet was fuperbly illuminated with different-coloured lamps, hung upon the mafts, the yards, the fides, and among the rigging. The darknefs of the night, and the wild irregularity of the lamps, which appeared like meteors in the air, had an uncommon, but grand, effect. The city, too, was illuminated in every quarter.

Her Imperial Majefty dined in public with her naval and military officers upon Tuefday. Upon Thurfday the populace were entertained with oxen roafted whole, and two fountains of wine. The fountains were erected in front of the palace, and the oxen were placed upon ftages near them. The fountains were beautifully painted and decorated. The wine fprung into the air the moment that her Imperial Majefty appeared in the balcony. The populace

crowded about the bafons which received the falling vintage, and, ufing their hats for cups, dipped them into the bafons, and quaffed the fparkling liquor. Another party, at the fame fignal, mounted the ftages, and pulled in a thoufand pieces the filken cover which hid the bodies of the oxen; their heads and gilded horns alone being feen before. The oxen were then quickly diffected; and from their bellies, ftuffed with every fort of viands, were fhowered fowls, tongues, hams, joints of veal, mutton, &c. upon the heads of the mobility. I could perceive Catharine fmiling at the ftruggles among her fubjects for loaves and fifhes: it was only a coarfer picture of the fame ftruggles among her courtiers. The fountains and ftages, from the fwarms of affailants, refembled bee-hives. The fortunate were repelling thofe beneath them from getting up, fecuring their feats near the oxen and the wine, and diftributing to their friends a leg of mutton, or a hatful of the juice of the grape.

In walking home I found it eafy to overtake the honeft Ruffians: moft of whom

had

had burdens which they found difficult to carry. Every faithlefs puddle betrayed their feet. They were in general boafting of having got drunk with wine like gentlemen!

On the fucceeding Tuefday, a public mafquerade was given at court, and all ranks admitted by tickets. The Emprefs, the Grand Duke and Duchefs, with the young Imperial family, the Ruffian Minifters, the foreign Ambaffadors, the naval and military officers, the principal inhabitants of the city, as well as the loweft claffes, were affembled together. The grand ball-room was allotted for the polite part of the affembly, and here they continued dancing the moft part of the night. Her Imperial Majefty appeared in this room about ten o'clock, but foon retired. The Grand Duke and Duchefs, arm in arm, walked through every room—and with fome difficulty, the crowd was fo great. Befides the affemblage in character and dreffes, and in dominos, were an equal number in their ordinary habits; which, however, were more

more curious and various than the others. The Ruſſian boor, the Finlander, the Coſſac, the Tartar; Turks, Polanders, and many others, in their native robes, and ſpeaking together the different languages of their nations, preſented a group of ſingular variety. The Swediſh and Ruſſian officers, in their reſpective uniforms, were now walking ſide by ſide, or mixing in the dance.

The gala days ended with fire-works, which were played off in a field adjoining to the ſummer gardens. A ſmall wooden building was fitted up for the accommodation of the Imperial family, fronting this field; and ſtages fitted up around it for the conveniency of the public. The firing of cannon announced the approach of Catharine, and a ſky-rocket ſoon after gave the ſignal to begin. The temple of Janus opened its gates; the furies hiſſed, and toſſed their flaming brands within it; the thundering of cannon and of muſketry declared the raging of war. Peace ſucceeded, and the gates of Janus were ſhut. The temple

of

of Minerva blazed forth, and moved towards the place where her Imperial Majesty was feated; the temple of Janus, at the fame time, removing to a diftance. The Imperial initial was emblazoned, and appeared amidft a glory playing round it. Another temple difplayed the bleffings of peace, of fcience, of agriculture and commerce, while two palm branches flourifhed, one at each fide. This temple was perhaps more emblematical of the fituation of Ruffia than her Imperial Majefty intended.— The peaceful arts are too frequently in Ruffia furrounded and incommoded with the fire-works of war. The whole concluded with a grand *feu de joie*; the Imperial eagle foaring in the fky: when peace and filence were reftored. The fummer gardens were fuperbly illuminated. The cloudy fky was deeply tinged with the blaze from all fides, and gave the idea that the gods were rejoicing at the return of peace among men. As I went home, I faw the young Princeffes coming to the fummer gardens in their carriage, to view the

the pleaſing ſcene there. They were not permitted to go ſooner; the noiſe of the fire-works would have been too harſh for their infant ears.

LETTER LI.

Winter Landſcape.—Hunting.—Ruſſian and Finland Peaſants.

Ingria, November 1791.

I AM never ſo happy as when in the country, even in the midſt of a Scythian winter. The villages are now all covered with ſnow; the landſcape is overſpread with a ſheet of pure virgin white, interſperſed with black woods, but whoſe tops are dreſſed in winter uniform.

I imagine that I hear the prowling wolf in the night; yet that animal very ſeldom comes near the habitations of men. I am juſt returned from hunting thoſe ſavages.

The huntſman in the ſervice of the noble proprietor of the adjoining eſtate gave notice this morning, that he had diſcovered the

the track of the wolves, and ſummoned the tenants to aſſiſt him in deſtroying them. In winter the wolves can do little or no miſchief, as the cattle are all within doors; but, as they are very deſtructive in ſummer to the herds, the peaſants take the favourable opportunity, when the ſnow betrays their haunts, to leſſen the number of thoſe robbers. About fifty or ſixty Finlanders were ſoon collected, armed with clubs. The nets were put into a ſledge. I went in another ſledge, and carried a muſket with me. Upon our arrival at the woods, the nets were hung upon the branches of the trees, about five feet diſtance from the ground, being the depth of the nets, and they extended an Engliſh mile around that part of the foreſt where the wolves lay. The nets thus placed, the Finlanders were ſtationed near them, and upon the outſide, hiding themſelves behind buſhes. All this is execute with moſt profound ſilence. Another party, when every thing is in readineſs, ſurround that part of the foreſt to which the nets have not reached, to prevent the

the wolves from efcaping that way, and, gradually advancing, fet up a dreadful howling; and, at the fame time, firing mufketry, they drive the game into the fnares. The wolf, when he approaches them, makes a leap. He feldom clears them, though the height is only five feet, but he falls upon the net, and is entangled. The nets are flender, and would foon be torn in pieces, and the wolf efcape. The peafants are active to prevent this, and inftantly affault him with their clubs. The animal is overpowered, after making a fierce refiftance, and, being tied with ropes, is put into a fledge, and carried to the village, generally alive. At this hunt, feveral wolves approached the nets; but, feeing the guard, returned, and attempted to efcape at other parts, or boldly to pufh their way through the hunters who were driving them into the nets, and who could only give thofe fleet animals a paffing blow. One of them entangled himfelf at a place where a very old peafant was ftationed. The Finlander ftruck the wolf feveral times; but with a feeble arm, and the favage got off.

Another wolf advanced nearly to the ſame ſpot: the old man renewed his ſtrokes, and calling for aſſiſtance, which ſoon arrived, the wolf was beat down and ſecured. I heard the ſhout of victory, and ran to the ſcene of action. The animal no longer ſtruggled: he lay in the ſledge, the blood ſtreaming from his head, and eyed with ſeeming calmneſs the ſurrounding peaſantry, who were ſtill puſhing at him with their clubs, reproaching him for the depredations he and his companions had made upon their herds, recounting their ſeveral loſſes, threatening ſevere puniſhment, and, indeed, partly executing their threats inſtantly upon the ſullen priſoner. I induced them to deſiſt, until a ſpecial jury had given ſentence. It was an old, large and bold-looking devil. We carried him away in triumph. He wanted an eye, which he had probably loſt in ſome former narrow eſcape, or, like other thieves, in ſome diſpute on a diviſion of plunder in the foreſt. The peaſantry no longer inſulted him with blows, but they continued to pour upon the wolf a great deal of per-

 ſonal

ſonal reflection, and the word *canaille*, common to the Ruſſian boors, and not long ſince to French gentlemen, was liberally beſtowed. Where I was ſtationed with my club, for I had given my gun to that party who drove in the game, I ſaw a wolf flying towards me. I unluckily called to the peaſants to come to my aid. The animal took the alarm, and directed his courſe another way. The bearded Finlanders were very angry with me; but this is my firſt expedition; I will learn to hold my tongue for the future, until I have got at leaſt one blow at the enemy among the nets. Call me coward, if you pleaſe, but the truth muſt be out—I was a little frightened. The hunters were making the woods echo with a ſort of war-whoop. I could not be ſure that only one wolf was approaching me—there might be two—three—a dozen! There might be a crony bear among them.—I ſaw the ſavage indiſtinctly among the buſhes. He might be a tiger: I had only the words of the peaſants to make me think alone of wolves: and then, again, what will

ſurpriſe you, I was reciting Thomſon's verſes at the inſtant—

By wintry famine rous'd——
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood, bony, and ghauſt and grim!
Aſſembling wolves in raging troops deſcend.

The peaſants had never heard of Mr. Thomſon, or his verſes—they thought of the wolf's ſkin; or, if a bear appeared—ſo much the better.

The old man gained the laurels of the day: I ſaw an expreſſive glow of ſatisfaction upon his features, and he recorded his former exploits and ſucceſs in hunting, with much animation. The chief huntſman is a venerable Ruſſian, with a beard falling down to his girdle. He rode upon horſeback, and viſited every place to ſee all things in order before he permitted the ſport to begin. He rides out in the morning, when there has happened the preceding night or day a new fall of ſnow; upon whoſe ſmooth ſurface he can trace the ſavage wanderer with certainty, and know the number, too, which have entered any particular thicket. When he has

has discovered their haunt, he next makes a circuitous journey around it, to view whether or no they remain, or have gone out at another part; and puts up marks to inform himself again of the track of his journey, or of the fittest spots where to place the nets. Having assured himself that the wolves are resting in the thickets, he hastens to the neighbouring villages, and procures assistant hunters. One end of the net is generally placed opposite to the track where the beasts had entered, as they often return the same road. This wolf now taken had his legs untied upon his being housed; but the Finlanders would not trust him with the free exercise of his jaws. He was sent to Petersburgh as a curiosity.—They are seldom caught alive, or rather allowed to live, as the peasants prefer killing them for the skin. Nor are there many killed or found near Petersburgh; and, however strange it may seem, there are kept in the Russian metropolis collections of wild animals, bears, wolves, &c. to show to the inhabitants, who, notwithstanding that they

are furrounded by forefts in which thefe animals dwell, feldom fee them but in fuch collections. Bear-baiting is a Sunday's entertainment to the mobility in the city. For this purpofe excellent dogs are kept, moftly of the Danifh breed. Two dogs are allowed to the attack upon the bear, who, previoufly to fuch engagements, is deprived of his teeth and claws. Notwithftanding this, he proves an overmatch for the dogs, and the keepers are under the neceffity of relieving thofe animals with their fticks from the awful embraces of Bruin. The dogs are amazingly eager in the affault; but having enjoyed one or two hugs of their antagonift, they feem very cool and cautious in renewing the battle. The bear receives his enemies with open mouth, and rearing upon his hinder legs. The attack of the dogs is confined to the ears, the pain of which, being repeatedly torn, quickens the motions and ferocity of the bear, who then breathes defiance, courts the engagement, and, notwithftanding the keepers are clofe upon him, directs all his fury againft the dogs.

An

An old bear is the moſt ſavage-looking animal in the creation. The young ones are very playful. I have ſeen them not above fifteen inches in length, and juſt taken from the mother. They are always running about; and when they feel a check from the cord they are tied with, they rear upon their hinder legs, in the ſame manner with the oldeſt ones, and return. They eat any thing given to them, and ſuck your hand, if you hold it out, very inoffenſively.

I have got a-talking about wild animals. Let me entertain you with an account of others not quite ſo wild. It is of a Finland bride and bridegroom. The bridegroom is a young fellow of ſeventeen. He has been in love theſe ſix months. Don't blame the poor girl; ſhe too has been dying of love. They are both clothed in ſheepſkins; but this is nothing to the purpoſe. Well then, they had no money; and the bridegroom told me, with tears in his eyes, that the wedding expences would amount to ten roubles, or thirty ſhillings, in ſalt, black bread, butter, oil, garlic, and brandy!

 The

The money was at laſt provided: the wedding-day fixed; and the gentleman who does me the honour to be my footman, cook and butler, gave me notice, that his ſervices muſt be diſpenſed with for a day. This is the very day of their nuptials. The Finland maidens are all dreſſed to the beſt in ruſſet and ribbons. The laſſes think of what they muſt all come to, and ſmile, and ſing, and ſigh. It is Sunday. The wedding-folks drove paſt my windows in ſledges to church, and returned in the evening, ſinging in full chorus. The female charioteers beat time with their whips. The bride and bridegroom alone, look as if they were afraid of each other.

The peaſants, Ruſſians and Finlanders, for the moſt part, marry in their own villages. Their affections ſeldom wander to the neighbouring villages; but they are no way reſtricted in their choice: only the woman muſt be a ſlave to the ſame lord with her huſband. The female thus changes her maſter and place; the males never can. The Finlanders

are leſs polite to their women than the Ruſſians. It is common to ſee ſledges crowded with the men going to church or other places, upon holidays, while the women are picking their way amongſt the ſnow upon foot. The Ruſſian boor, on the contrary, ſits by his female friend or acquaintance in the ſledge, embracing her with his arms, and not unfrequently kiſſing her without ceremony, in the moſt public manner. The Ruſſian poſſeſſes a ſoul brave and manly; the Finlander is cowardly and mean in all his actions.

LETTER LII.

The Jealousy of Swedes and Russians of the British Officers in their Service.—Russian Navy.—Danish and Swedish Navies.—Proposed Expedition of a Russian Squadron round the World.—Anecdotes of Captain Trevenen.

St. Petersburgh, December 1791.

I IMAGINE myself at home in this metropolis: the house is filled with British officers naval and military. The governor of Petersburgh is of British extraction, the descendant of general Bruce, who with some other gentlemen headed the emigrants from Scotland upon the murder of Charles I. When I examine the court almanack, I find the names of Balmain, Balnaves, and many other British surnames among the list of the Russian nobles.

A party of those emigrants went to Swe-

den, and hence we find two British surnames among the higher ranks of the Swedes.

The Russian and Swedish armies opposed to each other at this moment are both of them commanded by officers descended of British parents. Count Hamilton commands the Swedes, and General Mitchelson the active part of the Russian troops. Numbers of other Britons, chiefly Scots, are found ranged upon each side, and discharging their muskets in each other's faces! It appears that the Swiss are not the only people who let out their blood to hire.

Both Swedes and Russians call us intruders, and say that they would be much obliged to us to permit them to defend their own country. The Russians certainly need us in their navy. Their naval officers have courage, but they have few opportunities of practising their profession. The Baltic is little better than a fish-pond for the exercising of fleets, and the northern navies have no business in the Atlantic and Pacific. The Russians, indeed, sometimes pay a visit

a visit to the Mediterranean to frighten the Turk: and the Empress has long attempted to procure some island in this sea, where her fleet might occasionally retreat, and be laid up or refitted. It is to be regretted that we did not sell Minorca to Catharine, before it was otherwise disposed of.

The Russian fleet consists of between 30 and 40 sail of the line in the Baltic, and ten in the Black Sea. They are mostly built of fir, and at Archangel in the White Sea, where Peter first commenced his naval operations. Alexander, who himself was a great copier, was copied by Peter. The Czar put to sea in a small vessel, to view the elements which he had in his mind to subdue. He modelled his fleet, like the Romans, from a boat found accidentally; and like the Romans he soon defeated the navy of the Swedish Carthage.

Russia produces oak, but of a diminutive size, and inferior quality. The fir-built navy soon decays, and thereby, from the necessity of being frequently rebuilt, creates an enormous expence. The chief builder at Petersburgh

burgh is an Engliſhman of the name of Coleman. It is wonderful what fine veſſels he makes from the pooreſt materials. If this empire furniſhes no timber fit for conſtructing the hulls of ſhips, it abundantly ſupplies the beſt materials for rigging, and all manner of ſtores, in hemp, tar, iron, &c. England ſends to Ruſſia for rigging for her navy; Ruſſia ſhould ſend to England for a navy to her rigging; and it would be the beſt economy. The naval eſtabliſhments coſt the empire a conſiderable part of its revenues, and fifty thouſand of its brave ſubjects, who are annually ſacrificed in hoſpitals upon the moſt wretched ſyſtem of management.

The navy of Denmark conſiſts of 30 ſail of the line; that of Sweden of 30 ſail, and the Ruſſian of 40 ſail. The whole northern fleet of courſe amounts to 100 ſhips of the line.

Such a fleet could with difficulty find room to engage in the Baltic, to contend for the dominion of which they are fitted out. The Baltic does not bear ſuch a proportion

portion to this fleet, as the navy of Lilliput would do to the Baltic.

The northern powers lay themſelves open to the ſevereſt cenſure in oppreſſing their reſpective ſubjects to ſupport ſuch an uſeleſs force, and to the ſevereſt ridicule for their folly and extravagance.

Before the war broke out with Sweden, the Empreſs had propoſed to ſend a ſquadron round the world, under the command of an Engliſh officer. Captain Trevenen, who had performed the circumnavigation of the globe with the celebrated captain Cook, was appointed to take charge of this ſquadron. The war with the Swedes put a ſtop to this expedition: the veſſels built on purpoſe for the voyage are now rotting in Cronſtadt harbour; and captain Trevenen was prevailed upon to accept the commiſſion of poſt-captain in the Ruſſian fleet. This gentleman has become a great favourite with the Empreſs, in conſequence of having diſtinguiſhed himſelf under admiral Greig, as has been already noticed.

No other ſquadron but a Ruſſian could

find

find anchorage in their own harbours at both extremities of the earth, and belonging to the ſame continent and uninterrupted empire. It is wonderful that an inland and almoſt unknown kingdom, tributary to every Tartar horde, bordering upon no ſea, ſhould, in the courſe of one hundred and fifty or two hundred years, ſwell out upon all ſides, conquer all nations, and have her coaſts waſhed by every ſea, and every ocean! The northern ocean rolls his waves upon the coaſts of Siberia, Lapland, and Samoyeda; the Baltic ſea, upon the ſhores of Finland and Livonia; the Black ſea and Caſpian, upon Ruſſian Tartary: and the Indian and eaſtern oceans upon the ſhores of Kamtſchatka.

But with all theſe ſeas and oceans Ruſſia has no occaſion for ſo large a fleet. In all this vaſt extent of dominion, ſhe has no maritime ſtate worth her apprehenſion, except the Danes and Swedes, whoſe intereſt it is equally with hers to make a bonfire of their navies.

Upon the death of admiral Greig, captain

tain Trevenen would have been appointed to the command of the fleet, could the Empreſs have with propriety promoted him ſo rapidly. A jealouſy, very natural as well as laudable, in the native officers prevented this. They began to ſpeak very openly of the Empreſs's predilection for Britiſh officers, who, they ſaid, ran away with all the fame and merit of the naval ſervice. —The Empreſs appointed a Ruſſian for her admiral, and he has been very fortunate, and perhaps deſervedly ſo.

Captain Trevenen, notwithſtanding his misfortunes in the naval campaign of 1789, continued in the ſame favour with Her Imperial Majeſty. In the ſpring of 1790 this gentleman was ſeized with ſudden illneſs. Frequent meſſages from court ſhewed the attention of Her Majeſty, and the captain, in return for ſuch diſtinguiſhed honour paid him, embarked at a moment that his ſervices were much needed, notwithſtanding he was not recovered from his diſtemper. He choſe the oldeſt of the ſhips of war. He ſaid, he would not again run the riſk of

loſing

losing a new vessel among the rocks of the gulph of Finland.

The Russian rear-admiral Powalishkin, with captains Trevenen, Thesiger, and two other Russian captains, were stationed in the channel through which the Swedish fleet were to attempt to escape from Wyburg Bay. These ships received the whole fire of the Swedish fleet. Captain Trevenen was wounded by a cannon-ball, which took away a great part of his hip; and, notwithstanding every thing was done to save the life of this valuable officer and worthy man, by his very skilful surgeon Mr. Macdougal, a mortification ensued, and he expired a few days after that victory, which ruined the Swedish King in the loss of his fleet.

The same ball which carried with it the fate of the gallant Trevenen, broke the leg of his first lieutenant Mr. Atkin, and shot a third officer through the body, lodging finally in the opposite side of the ship. It is remarkable that captain Trevenen's widow ordered the ball to be brought to her; and

and ſhe keeps this ſtrange memorandum of a huſband whom ſhe tenderly loved.

The war now at an end, the hoſtile navies returned to port. The relics of the Swediſh fleet were blocked up in Sweaborg or Helſingfors. One part of the Ruſſian ſquadron went, as uſual, to Revel; the other to Cronſtadt. Few of them, except thoſe which were ſtationed in the channel, were much hurt; but it was a ſhocking ſight to behold the wounded, dying, and ſick in the hoſpitals. At the end of every war, the wounded and dying ſhould be carried on biers in the front of royal and imperial palaces, that ſovereigns might ſee for a moment the calamities which too frequently their ambition ſolely brings upon their ſubjects.

I ſaw ſome who had but one arm, others who had loſt both legs: a third had his face rendered hideous with ſcars; a fourth groaned under the agony of amputation. Death in every form ſeemed to preſide in this aſſemblage of human miſery, and carts were

were crowded with coffins containing the dead for interment.

I haſtened from this awful ſcene, and was happy to forget it amidſt the noiſe of the rejoicings already mentioned for the peace at Peterſburgh.

LETTER LIII.

Naval Campaign, Ruſſia with Sweden—Action near Fredrickſham.—Capture of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet.—Action at Revel.—Defeat of the Swedes.—Action off Cronſtadt, between the Ruſſian and Swediſh grand Fleets.—Defeat of the Swediſh grand Fleet in Wyburg Bay.—Anecdote of Guſtavus III.—Defeat of the Ruſſian Galley Fleet under the Command of Prince Naſſau.—Anecdotes of the Britiſh Officers killed.

St. Peterſburg, November 1791.

THE Swedes commenced the naval campaign of 1790, ſo early as the month of April, with an attack upon the Ruſſian town called Baltic-Port, near the mouth of the gulph of Finland, which they laid under contribution. About the ſame time the Swediſh galley fleet at Helſingfors ſailed towards Fredrickſham, where lay the flotilla of Ruſſia,

ſia, but in no condition to receive an enemy. The Swediſh admiral, notwithſtanding ſo fair an opportunity offered to make an eaſy prey of the Ruſſians, delayed the attack for two days.

During this time the Ruſſians added ſeveral more galleys, which were unrigged at the arrival of the Swedes, to their fleet. The Swedes, after an obſtinate engagement, took every veſſel oppoſed to them, being much ſuperior in number and force. Had the Swedes commenced the attack inſtantly upon their arrival, it is uncertain but the fortreſs of Fredrickſham would have fallen into their hands. This unpardonable neglect gave time to receive a reinforcement of troops into the garriſon; and the beſiegers, as if determined to prove their folly, made an attack upon the town with only a ſmall part of their fleet. Their ſhips and men were nearly deſtroyed.

The capture of the Ruſſian galleys was a heavy blow. The news of it, however, only excited the greater activity in the Ruſſians. The Empreſs gave orders that an-

other fleet ſhould be built and ready for ſea in a few weeks! The mallet reſounded upon the banks of the Neva and at Cronſtadt, and this new fleet of ſmall armed ſhips and gun-boats was actually ready in a few weeks.

The Swedes had formed the beſt plan poſſible for annihilating the Ruſſian navy, and muſt have nearly, or altogether, ſucceeded; but owing to ſome infatuation and irreſolution, or perhaps diſaffection of many of their officers, they totally failed of ſucceſs. The attack upon Baltic-Port was not followed ſo ſoon as it ought to have been by another upon Revel. In this inſtance again they gave the Ruſſians notice to prepare themſelves; and every expedition was uſed to fit out the Ruſſian ſquadron lying at Revel, and conſiſting only of ten ſail of the line, and three or four frigates.

The harbours of Cronſtadt and Revel cannot, ſeparately, contain the whole of the Ruſſian navy; and as the latter harbour is ſeldom frozen up, the Swedes could, either in March or April, have attacked the ſquadron

dron lying here, while the greater part of the Ruſſian fleet were froſt-bound at Cronſtadt.

The duke of Sudermania, with twenty-two ſail of the line, appeared before Revel. The ſhips under admiral Tchitchigow lay in the beſt poſition, and with ſprings upon their cables. The enemy's fleet entered the harbour. The headmoſt of them received the raking fire of the Ruſſians as they advanced; and the wind coming contrary, and two of the Swediſh ſhips getting aground, made it adviſable for the others to retreat. The Ruſſians captured one of the veſſels; the other was burnt by her own crew. If the duke of Sudermania could depend upon his men and officers, why did he not renew the attack ſome future day, inſtead of proceeding to Cronſtadt to attack a fleet nearly equal in force to his own, and with a certainty too of being followed by the Revel ſquadron? When he failed in beating a ſmall fleet, why proceed to attack a greater and in a ſituation more difficult of approach than Revel? It is true, the Ruſſian fleet at Cronſtadt lay in the harbour unrigged. It does not, how-

ever, appear that the duke knew this circumſtance, and he ſlowly proceeded for Cronſtadt, expecting to find the Ruſſian ſhips prepared for him. What negligence was it, not to procure better information? When the royal commander arrived within ſight of Cronſtadt, the Ruſſian fleet was indeed prepared to meet him, and the Revel ſquadron was at his heels. Thus the duke ſeems to have courted the deſtruction which awaited his fleet.

The Swediſh galleys, that had lately proved victorious at Fredrickſham, joined the grand fleet, and approached Cronſtadt at the ſame time. The grand ſcene of action was begun, in which the ancient maritime power of Sweden was, by a ſeries of miſconduct and unforeſeen events, to be totally overthrown; to be deſtroyed without being conquered, or rather without being beaten.

The Ruſſian ſquadron at Cronſtadt, conſiſting of ſeventeen ſail of the line, ſeven of them of 100 guns, which had been equipped with the moſt aſtoniſhing expedition, ſailed under the command of a German officer, admiral Kruſe, and were in a few days fol-

followed and joined by eleven light frigates and armed ſhips, commanded by an Iriſh officer, captain Denniſon.

The Ruſſian fleet lay at anchor, after leaving Cronſtadt, off Craſſna Gorca, a point of land ſeveral leagues diſtant from Cronſtadt, in an irregular line of battle. Next day after the junction between the grand fleet and the frigates, the Swediſh fleet was diſcovered to windward, bearing down, favoured by a weſterly wind, in a line of battle, conſiſting of twenty-three ſail of the line and thirteen frigates. The Ruſſian admiral directly threw out the ſignal to form the line. Both fleets continued under ſail all that night, without coming to action, and were in the ſame poſition to each other in the morning. The weather was hazy: the wind ſhifted to the eaſtward, and the Ruſſian fleet bore down upon the Swedes, engaging with ſeventeen ſhips a line of battle oppoſed to them of thirty-ſix ſail; the whole of the Swediſh frigates having formed the line with the greater ſhips. Both fleets were upon the ſame courſe, on the ſtarboard tack.

Captain

Captain Dennifon remained with the fquadron of frigates in referve, and watching the motions of the Swedifh galley fleet, which hovered about at no great diftance. Anxious to diftinguifh himfelf, and having difcretionary power to act as he faw beft, he determined to bear down upon the centre of the Swedifh fleet, and to engage them. At this moment he obferved the Swedifh van attempting to double upon the Ruffian line of battle. This officer inftantly bore down upon the van of the enemy; and, though fupported by only two of his frigates, the others not coming to clofe action, he fucceeded in preventing the intended manœuvre of the Swedes. The whole of the Swedifh fleet bore away about fix o'clock in the morning, after a harmlefs fight of two hours continuance.

In the afternoon of the fame day, the wind again changed to the weft. The Swedifh fleet bore down again in a line of battle abreaft upon their enemies, who waited for them in a line of battle ahead. This engagement lafted four hours. The Ruffian frigates were

were not much engaged in this battle. The Ruſſian fleet yielded the victory to the Swedes, and retreated towards Cronſtadt, with a view of drawing the enemy into narrow channels, where they could not employ all their ſhips.

The hoſtile fleets remained near each other, without fighting, until the afternoon of the ſecond day, when, after an action of nearly the ſame continuance as the former, with as little effect, the Ruſſians again gave way. The Swediſh fleet did not purſue in either battle: they could not without imminent hazard from the ſurrounding ſhoals near Cronſtadt, and it was not the buſineſs of admiral Kruſe to court a cloſe engagement with a ſuperior force.

He waited the coming of the Revel ſquadron under the Ruſſian commander in chief. The duke of Sudermania, dreading the approach of this diviſion while he remained ſo near the ſhoals of Cronſtadt, and to be caught between two fires, deſiſted from any farther attack upon admiral Kruſe, and ſailed with a view of intercepting the Revel ſquadron then hourly expected.

Admiral

Admiral Krufe then followed the enemy, but firft got fight of the other divifion of the Ruffian fleet under the Sifcar Iflands. The Venus frigate, captain Dennifon, the fame day made the fignal for feeing the Swedifh fleet fteering towards Wyburg Bay, which lies to the weftward of the Sifcar Iflands, and confequently they were paft and clear of the Ruffian united fleet, and might have proceeded in fafety to their own harbour of Sweaborg. The Ruffian fleet being at the fame time under fail, purfued the enemy, and foon arrived off the bay where the Swedes had taken refuge. The Swedifh fleet were feen lying at anchor in a line of battle. Two narrow channels led into this bay, which were guarded by feveral large fhips.

The Ruffian fleet kept under way that night; and next day captain Dennifon was ordered with his frigates into the outward bay to found; and finding the roadftead fafe for the largeft fleet, the whole came to an anchor, immediately without the Swedifh fleet, and nearly within gun-fhot of each

other,

other. Some banks and rocks ſeparated them. Two line-of-battle ſhips with the ſquadron of frigates were ſtationed to guard the channels, where the Swediſh guard-ſhips lay.

The duke of Sudermania had ſeen the Revel diviſion as he ſailed from Cronſtadt, and had determined to engage it. The Swediſh fleet were ſeen by ſeveral Engliſh merchant ſhips, making towards the Revel ſquadron, and even uſing oars, and having boats a-head of every ſhip towing them nearer their enemies. The Swediſh officers and crews were in the higheſt ſpirits, and the air rung with their ſhouts. The common ſailors and ſoldiers of the Swedes were enthuſiaſtically fond of a ſovereign who accompanied them in all their dangers; and they frequently declared they would follow wherever he led. He led them to deſtruction. Guſtavus, endowed with the moſt heroic courage, did not poſſeſs with this the qualities requiſite in a great commander. Fearing nothing, he gave his orders precipitately, without looking forward to the conſequences.

He ordered his fleet to ceafe the purfuit, and to go into the bay of Wyburg for the purpofe of protecting his galley-fleet, who were arrived near it, at a place called Biorka Sound. Did his Swedifh majefty not know that there was no Ruffian galley fleet to attack them, and that no other could do it? The Ruffian grand fleet could not purfue fmall boats near the fhore among the Finland rocks. Prince Naffau, at this period, was at Cronftadt, and the galley-fleet not yet collected together. What little pains had Guftavus taken to procure intelligence which would have faved both his fleets!

The Swedifh galley-fleet was engaged in the battles off Cronftadt. It approached that end of the Ruffian line ftretching towards Carelia, and annoyed the Ruffian fhips, who could not hurt in their turn fuch fmall objects. It confifted of fixty-eight veffels. The Ruffian frigates chafed them into fhore, but the wefterly winds favoured their efcape; at the fame time that the Swedifh grand fleet retreated.

Without provifion, and, it is reported, with

with no large quantity of powder and ball, King Guftavus ordered his navy into an enemy's harbour, furrounded by an enemy's country and fuperior fleet! Yet from all thefe difficulties, amidft all thefe dangers, he might have efcaped, had not fome unfortunate accidents occurred.

The whole Swedifh naval force were at this moment furrounded by the navy of Ruffia. The exiftence of Sweden as a naval power was to be decided in a few days, and hung upon the caft of a die! Admiral Tchitchigow difpatched a courier to Her Imperial Majefty, then at Zarfko Zelo, with news of this critical fituation of the enemy. Catharine, agitated with hope and fear for the event, obferved upon the uncertainty of fate. The courier, a young Englifh lieutenant, forgetting the auguft prefence he was in, exclaimed, By God! we have them, *Madam!* not a fhip can efcape us! Her Majefty fmiled, and thanked him for his good wifhes for the fuccefs of her arms.

The flotilla commanded by the Prince Naffau was not yet ready. A part of this

armament lay at anchor near Cronſtadt, waiting for the gun-boats and other veſſels fitting out at Peterſburgh. I had occaſion to paſs, ſeveral times, between Cronſtadt and Peterſburgh by water during this period. I beheld ſmall diviſions of this newly-created fleet rowed by their crews in their voyage to Cronſtadt. The ſight of theſe row-boats filled with ſlaves at the oar, and with ſoldiers briſtling with armour, exhibited the appearance of piratical adventures. The gulph reſounded with the ſtrokes of oars, and with the ſongs of the crews.

Both the grand fleet and galley fleet of Sweden were crowded with ſoldiers; and many of the tranſports had horſes on board, to the number of two or three hundred. While they remained in Wyburg bay, ſeveral fruitleſs attempts were made to penetrate into the country, for what purpoſe I cannot gueſs, unleſs to obtain proviſions at all riſks. The Ruſſian fortreſs of Wyburg, and the numerous land forces of Ruſſia on ſhore, were not to be conquered by ſuch ſmall numbers of troops, and theſe ſtarving for

want of food. The King at laſt ſaw his error, but not until the arrival of Prince Naſſau with the Ruſſian flotilla, which added another difficulty to his eſcape, and at a time too when his ſeamen and ſoldiers were diſheartened by famine, and misfortune of all ſorts.

The Ruſſian galley-fleet were joined upon their arrival by captain Denniſon's ſquadron of frigates, and an attack was meditated upon the Swediſh flotilla lying at Biorka ſound. This laſt conſiſted of about ſixty ſail, moſtly gun-boats. The gun-boats are ſmall open veſſels, carrying one piece of cannon in their bows, and another in their ſtern. The attack of the Ruſſians commenced in the night, two days after the arrival of their galleys. The Prince had perhaps ſuſpected an attempt of the Swedes to retreat that night, and wiſhed to come to blows before they got away; or otherwiſe the attack was ill adviſed, ſeeing the frigates in the dark would not venture, near the ſhore and among rocks, to ſupport the gun-boats.

This fight was nothing more than a firing

at random amidſt the clouds of night. The hoſtile fleets only ſaw each other by the flames from the mouths of the cannon, which ſerved for torches. The fire of the frigates was at too great diſtance to do any execution; and the Prince Naſſau, ever eager to diſtinguiſh himſelf, but not verſant in ſea affairs, reprobated captain Denniſon for not hazarding all his veſſels in this blind-man's-buff engagement.

The Swediſh flotilla had, previouſly to this fight, received orders from the King to be in readineſs for a retreat the firſt favourable wind. An eaſterly breeze in the morning was inſtantly ſeized for this purpoſe; and to retreat, not only from famine, but from a ſuperior force, the ſignal was given. The Swediſh galleys retreated by a channel near the ſhore, and were purſued by the Ruſſian galley-fleet and frigates. The grand fleet of Sweden cut, and ſtood out of this fatal bay by another channel, more diſtant from the coaſt: and the Swediſh tranſports by a third channel within both theſe. The channel by which the Swediſh galley-fleet and ſmall frigates

ran,

ran, was guarded by ſeveral Ruſſian light frigates. This retreat was however well conducted; and, although ſeveral gun-boats were taken, the greater part effected their eſcape to Fredrickſham, after being purſued by the Ruſſians as far as Hogland.

The Swediſh gun-boats were manned with ſailors, and were an overmatch for the awkward Ruſſian peaſants who rowed in purſuit of them.

The Swediſh tranſports were leſs ſucceſsful in their retreat. Sailing too near the ſhore to avoid the ſhot of the gun-boats and frigates, many of them got aground, and ſeveral threw the horſes of the dragoons overboard in vain, to lighten the barks, and to get off again. The moſt of the tranſports, their cargoes, their crews, and the ſoldiers, fell an eaſy prey to the Ruſſians. Guſtavus from the deck of his yacht, in which he accompanied the galley-fleet, ſaw the misfortunes of his navy and other veſſels, without being able to relieve them. This royal hero, retreating in a ſmall yacht, had ſeveral of his ſubjects killed by

his ſide; and the veſſel was ſo ſhattered by a ſhot that he was obliged to leave her, and go on board another ſmall veſſel. One of the crew was wounded in the arm—the King tore the order of Vaſa from his ſhoulder, and bound up the wound. Had the particular veſſel been known in which the King was, he would have been eaſily taken, and brought priſoner to Catharine.

The Ruſſians had ſtationed five ſhips of the line in the outward and main channel, under the command of a Ruſſian officer. Theſe five, with ſprings upon their cables, were to oppoſe the whole Swediſh grand fleet as they paſſed, while the reſt of the Ruſſian ſhips under admiral Tchitchigow remained idle ſpectators. The Swediſh fleet, though proceeding with a fair wind, were ſeverely galled by the raking fire of the five Ruſſian men of war. One Swediſh ſhip got aground before ſhe had paſſed the Ruſſian guard-ſhips; but all the reſt of the Swediſh navy paſſed in triumph; and the officers were congratulating each other upon their ſucceſs, when evil

miſchance

miſchance ſuddenly brought upon them calamity and defeat.

The Swedes had prepared two fire-ſhips, whoſe commanders had directions to ſet them on fire when they ſaw that all the Swediſh fleet had paſſed that of Ruſſia. One of theſe blew up without doing any harm to the enemy. The other was avoided as ſhe approached in flames towards the Ruſſian guard-ſhips, by their ſlipping their cables. A Swediſh ſhip of the line was not a great diſtance a-head of this fire-ſhip, into whoſe ſails the flames attracted the wind, and ſhe rapidly approached the Swediſh man of war, which, owing to the narrowneſs of the channel, could not avoid her. The fire-ſhip ran aboard of her, ſet her inſtantly in a blaze, and this ſhip, the fineſt in the fleet, was blown up, and every perſon in her, one excepted, periſhed.

The ſmoke of the late engagement, rendered more thick by this exploſion, was carried by the winds, and involved five or ſix of the Swediſh fleet, then directly a-head of the wreck. The conſequence was their

running aground. Another had got aſhore near the Swediſh guard-ſhips, prior to the accident; and after ſhe had paſſed them. Thus eight or nine ſail of the line had only to be picked up by the Ruſſians. Captain Denniſon took poſſeſſion of the firſt veſſel, which got aground as ſhe lay at anchor, or ſoon after ſhe had cut in Wyburg bay. I had frequent converſations with the captain of this ſhip, whoſe name is Trutiger. He gave me a plan of the ſituation of both fleets. Though he rejoiced at the eſcape of a conſiderable part of the Swediſh fleet, he confeſſed, that, had the Ruſſian admiral made a better diſpoſition of his fleet, not a ſhip of his nation could have eſcaped: and the diſpoſition was, ſimply, to have croſſed the channel with two or three lines of guard-ſhips, with ſprings upon their cables, every one of which lines, ſo advantageouſly ſtationed, muſt have ſo diſabled the Swediſh fleet in paſſing, as to have rendered them incapable of reſiſting the remainder of the Ruſſian navy, and which ought to have been waiting at the mouth of the

channel

channel to receive the enemy as they attempted to fly. Inftead of fuch a judicious plan, only five fhips were oppofed to twenty-two or twenty-three of equal force with themfelves; and the Ruffian fleet in the outward bay of Wyburg had not cut or flipped their cables, even when the remaining fifteen fhips of the Swedes had paffed the line of guard-fhips.

The fecond man of war which grounded after paffing the Ruffian guard-fhips ftill continued firing at the enemy, until all the other fhips of the Swedifh navy had got clear; when fhe ftruck her colours. The Swedifh officers of the veffels which ran afhore complained, in fome converfations I had with them, that the Ruffians continued firing into them, even when they lay aground and their colours ftruck. This muft have been owing to the confufion, and from their being indiftinctly feen through the fmoke.

The fecond Swedifh fhip that went afhore, was loft to the Ruffians through fome mifmanagement. She lay upon the edge of a bank; and in the attempt to get

her off, ſhe upſet or tumbled over, whereby many Ruſſians, as well as Swedes, were drowned. Four ſhips of the line were brought to Cronſtadt; the other two were wrecked where they lay.

In the chaſe of the Swediſh grand fleet, two more ſhips of the line were taken and carried into Revel, with one or two frigates; in one of theſe was the Swediſh rear admiral Leanker, who made a very obſtinate defence againſt two Ruſſian ſhips of the line. Thus were deſtroyed or taken from the Swedes in the courſe of three months, two ſhips at Revel, eight in Wyburg bay, and two more in the chaſe, in all twelve ſhips of from 60 to 70 guns. The relics of the Swediſh navy, thirteen ſail, took refuge in Sweaborg, where, had they gone about five weeks before, they would have remained untouched, and the Ruſſian navy idly paraded the gulph of Finland.

The Ruſſians took, beſides, from ſix to ſeven thouſand Swedes priſoners, of whom I have ſpoken in another place, with conſiderable quantities of naval ſtores.

The

The Swedifh flotilla lying near Fredrickf-ham and the mouth of the river Thymen was followed, fo foon as Prince Naffau had repaired the damages of his veffels, by the Ruffian light frigates, galleys and gun-boats.

The Ruffian flotilla lay at anchor at no great diftance from the Swedes, whofe galley-fleet lay behind two iflands; the main channel between the iflands, and narrower ones upon the oppofite fides, being defended by chains of gun-boats and by feveral batteries.

The Ruffian fleet was much fuperior in force; and the fignal for attack being given by Prince Naffau from his frigate the Catharine, about eight o'clock in the morning of the 28th of June, the whole proceeded with alacrity to battle, the wind blowing them down directly upon the enemy. The Swedifh firft line of battle confifted of four frigates and three xebecs. Their gun-boats were ranged behind, and upon the right and left, befides thofe which guarded the narrow

narrow channels. The Ruſſian line op-poſed to the Swedes conſiſted of four frigates and three xebecs, with one floating battery. The reſt of the Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats, amounting to 60 or 70 ſail, moſt unaccountably retreated at the very commencement of the action; and, during the period it laſted, remained at a conve-nient diſtance, diſregarding the orders of Prince Naſſau.

The wind had increaſed to a briſk gale. The Ruſſians in the gun-boats had never before ſeen the ocean, and could not ma-nage their oars, or perhaps this new and ſtrange ſituation might ſtrike many of them with a panic. It is not on board the gun-boats and galleys, as on board the larger veſſels, which may be brought into action without much exertion of the crews: two or three awkward rowers will put a galley or gun-boat in a dangerous ſituation, if the ſea is running high. When the Ruſſians have only to ſtand fire, to load and to diſcharge their guns, no fault will ever be found with

them

them in action: but they are not at all acquainted with the arts of seamanship, nor can it be expected.

The action this day was between four Russian frigates, commanded by the English officers Dennison, Marshall, Young and Perry, and the three xebecs, and a floating battery, commanded by Russian officers, against the whole Swedish fleet. Both the hostile squadrons lay abreast of each other at anchor, and continued for ten hours warmly engaged. The Swedish commander, now the ambassador from the Court of Stockholm at Petersburgh, seeing he could spare a part of his force, detached about fifty gun-boats through the narrow channels, with the gallant design of surrounding the superior fleet of the Russian galleys and gun-boats which remained inactive. The Russian galleys and gun-boats, though they kept at a cowardly distance from the fire of the enemy's frigates, instantly attacked their gun-boats, and drove them back. This done, they remained as before, without even attempting

attempting to ſecond their brave countrymen, who, while each ſhip had another of equal force to contend with of the Swedes, were beſides raked in all directions by ſurrounding gun-boats.

Many of the Ruſſian galleys and gun-boats were wrecked upon the ſhore adjoining to the narrow channels to which they had gone to the attack of the enemy's gun-boats, or driven through by the wind, or loſt by the awkwardneſs of the crews. Several of the crews from the wrecked gun-boats and galleys, getting aſhore upon the iſlands with what brandy they had ſaved with themſelves, employed their time in drinking and ſinging while the battle was raging in other quarters.

The Ruſſian frigates and xebecs maintained the moſt bloody and obſtinate engagement upon record. Captain Denniſon repeatedly ſent an officer to Prince Naſſau, to inform him of the certain conſequences of the action againſt the Ruſſian arms, if the galleys and gun-boats did not come down

to ſupport this ſquadron. About one o'clock captain Denniſon was ſtruck by a grape-ſhot in the head, and mortally wounded. The command of the ſhip devolved upon the firſt lieutenant, Mr. M'Carthy, who, aſſiſted by the Ruſſian colonel Tchetcherin in conducting this bloody ſtuggle, fought the frigate, until they were under the neceſſity, to prevent her ſinking, to run her aſhore. They were attacked on every ſide by gun-boats, and ſuſtained for ſeveral hours the fire of two and three of the Swediſh frigates, after theſe had ſucceeded in defeating, by means of the numerous gun-boats, the other Ruſſian ſhips and xebecs.

Captain Perry yielded after an obſtinate engagement. Captain Young fought his frigate, until his crew wiſely refuſed to obey, and to throw away their lives, without the ſmalleſt hopes of ſucceſs. The crew ran their ſhip on ſhore, and were taken priſoners.

Captain Marſhall, keeping up a fire which aſtoniſhed the Swedes, fought whilſt his

ſhip

ſhip was a wreck, and hardly able to ſup-port her cannon : even when the main deck was under water, and the frigate lying up-on a bank, which alone prevented her from ſinking, the gallant Marſhall thundered in broadſides againſt the enemy. He was wounded in the thighs and in the knee, a-round which he had wrapped the ſhip's enſign. He ſtood upon the quarter deck, leaning upon the arm of his lieutenant. While all hopes of victory were over, and not a gun above water, the ſhip ready to go to pieces with every wave, a ſhot cut him in two, and he fell upon the deck, covered with the ſea which broke over it. The colours ſtill remained flying. The Ruſſian prieſt called together the few left of the ſhip's company : he comforted them under their diſtreſs, and held the croſs to them all, which they devoutly kiſſed. The ſhip ſe-parated, the prieſt held up the croſs, kiſſed it, and went to the bottom, claſping it in his hands. Several of the crew hung upon pieces of the wreck, and even in this ſitua-

tion

tion ſome were killed by the enemy's ſhot, but which was not directed at them.

One boat, the only one which remained with captain Denniſon's frigate, was diſpatched to the relief of theſe heroes. Eight men and two officers were picked up. They were ſaved from one kind of death to meet another; and on coming on board the frigate, now fighting almoſt ſingly againſt the Swediſh fleet, they were placed at the guns, and bore their part in a battle of ſome hours. The Maria, at laſt, nearly in the ſame ſituation with the late captain Marſhall's ſhip, was run on ſhore about half paſt nine in the evening; the officers and men having ſupported, with unparalleled bravery, an unequal conteſt from nine or ten o'clock in the morning. The three xebecs had been taken before this; the bravery of the Ruſſian officers who commanded them would have yielded only to ſuch ſuperior force.

Prince Naſſau, ſeeing the battle at an end, is ſaid to have hid his face with his cloak. The galleys and gun-boats had by this time entirely

entirely gone away; nor did the Swedes attempt to purfue the greater number of enemies who ran from them.

Thus ended the naval campaign in the Baltic. Prince Naffau meant again to attack the Swedes, and had been joined by fome frigates for the purpofe. A courier arrived at the galley-fleet with the news of the peace, and prevented his intention being put into execution.

The Swedes took about 2000 prifoners of the Ruffians in the late battle, from the frigates captured, and from the galleys and gun-boats run on fhore. Prince Naffau is a very unfortunate, as he is a very brave officer. Admiral Tchitchigow is attended by the Goddefs of Fortune for his pilot: he, too, is a brave and gallant officer; the opinions with regard to his fkill are various.

The Ruffians by this fuccefsful campaign have eftablifhed a paramount power over the Baltic. The Swedes cannot again raife their heads for a century. It would be in vain for them to build fhips of the

line for the Ruſſians to capture. The ſuperiority of the Ruſſian fleet in numbers, if well conducted, muſt be at all times an overmatch for the former.

The Ruſſian fleets returned to port, the armies were diſperſed. And this is the end of war: Having been at much expence and trouble in cutting each other's throats, a form of peace is drawn up, and each nation congratulate themſelves upon their victories.

When will this farce of murder be at an end? When will men turn wiſe enough to check the ambition of princes, but without deſtroying the happieſt ſyſtem of government, which has a good King at its head?

LETTER LIV.

War threatened between Ruſſia and Great Britain.—Folly of War, and Advantages of Peace and Commercial Intercourſe between theſe Empires.—Impolicy of ſuffering Dantzic to be enſlaved by Pruſſia.

Peterſburgh, December 1791.

IT was to be expected that the concluſion of peace between Ruſſia and Sweden would be followed at no great diſtance by peace between the courts of Peterſburgh and Conſtantinople. This has been effected by the mediation of Great Britain and Pruſſia. It is to be lamented that they did not interfere ſooner. A friendly mediation of theſe great powers would have brought about ſo deſirable an object long ago. There remains

remains not a doubt but that the king of Sweden would have gladly embraced any reaſonable terms of accommodation with Ruſſia, in the end of the year 1788, and that the Turks would, with equal willingneſs, have accepted the terms of peace which Ruſſia offered in 1789, ſoon after the taking of Oczakow. Nay, the King of Sweden and the Grand Sultan, as well as the Empreſs, actually made advances at thoſe periods to this end; and as Ruſſia has not varied from her firſt offer to her enemies, it is plain who were to blame in preventing a treaty of negotiation.

In conſidering this ſubject, and to eſcape the ridicule of politicians, it is neceſſary to omit any reaſoning or argument which the cauſe of humanity might ſuggeſt. I muſt only conſider what increaſe of commerce did Britain purpoſe to herſelf, and what additional territory did Pruſſia, by fomenting this war?

From what I have already ſtated in my former letters, it will appear, to every

impartial man, that Britain and Ruſſia ought more naturally to be friends than any other two nations upon earth. The firſt cauſe of difference between them originated with the Ruſſians, who, in taking the lead in the armed neutrality, planned by Frederick the Great of Pruſſia, acted ungratefully towards Great Britain, and imprudently towards herſelf.—Let it be granted that Ruſſia, and Ruſſia alone, was the prop and inſtigator of this remarkable aſſociation: it muſt be granted, at the ſame time, that the Ruſſian productions are of the greateſt benefit to the ommerce of Britain.

That it became the dignity of our empire to reſent the conduct of Ruſſia, whatever might be the conſequence, no Briton will deny. But, did Ruſſia offer no reparation? Ruſſia offered to renew the ancient treaties of friendſhip and commerce that had, from the commencement of her being a commercial ſtate, ſubſiſted between us. Britain demanded that Ruſſia ſhould publicly diſavow her conduct in reſpect to the

the armed neutrality. Was it not moſt ſatisfactory to the offended dignity of Britain, that Ruſſia, ſenſible of her late error, ſhould come forward to meet her upon former friendly terms? Or was our nation to be better ſatisfied, if Ruſſia humbled herſelf to a degree of meanneſs, by diſavowing her public acts? Was it inconſiſtent with our dignity to accept of ſome apology conſiſtent with the dignity of Ruſſia, an empire eſteeming itſelf as great, and equally jealous of its dignity, as Britain?

Perhaps we did right, notwithſtanding the friendly diſpoſition of Ruſſia, to convince her, by ſome ſtep becoming our dignity, how dangerous it was, as well for her glory as for her intereſt, to offend us. Our miniſters, in refuſing every aid to Ruſſia which ſhe had been accuſtomed to receive from us, did nobly; and to this ſtep, as much as to the unfortunate campaign of Joſeph II. may be attributed the deſire of Ruſſia and Auſtria for peace in the ſummer of 1789. Since that time, Ruſſia had made friendly overtures to Britain, and Britain had beſides

retaliated upon her ſufficiently. What more was requiſite to be done in vindication of our honour? To proſecute Ruſſia any further was a purſuit of fooliſh vengeance, and injurious to the intereſts of our commerce. Allowing that another nation could be found, of equal extent, and producing the ſame commodities as Ruſſia, and in every circumſtance equally advantageous to our trade; yet to throw off our connection with Ruſſia, or to pick quarrels with her, would be improper: and, however wiſe it may be for us to encourage an intercourſe with other countries producing the ſame articles, in whatever quantity, in order to keep ourſelves as independent of Ruſſia as we can; it is certainly madneſs to irritate the Ruſſians, and to poiſon one of the chief ſprings of our commerce.

It is true that Ruſſia depends as much upon our demand, as we do upon her produce; but this is no argument why we ſhould be at variance. I think it rather argues that we ſhould be friends. It will be difficult to find another nation poſſeſſing the ſame

natural

natural advantages to our commerce as Ruſſia. Our miniſters are endeavouring to place Poland in competition with Ruſſia. The ſcheme is a good one; but are they aware that their other ſcheme of getting Dantzic for Pruſſia will knock the firſt plan on the head? If miniſters could effect a revolution in Pruſſia, and give her a conſtitution, modelled after our own, Dantzic would flouriſh under the Pruſſian, or any government if it is a free one. If Pruſſia underſtood her own intereſts ſhe would be contented with her preſent advantages, and reap a greater revenue than ſhe now does, by lowering the duties ſhe puts upon the trade of Poland paſſing to Dantzic. Dantzic muſt be ſet at liberty, and relieved from the grievous inſulting burthens upon foreigners trading with this mart, as well as upon the Dantzickers themſelves. It may be urged, Why might not Dantzic flouriſh under the Pruſſian, as well as Peterſburgh under the Ruſſian government? The anſwer is ſimple: The Ruſſian monarchs have been as diſtinguiſhed for their encouragement, their ſtrict obſervance of commercial laws, their

favour and patronage to trade and traders, as the Pruſſian kings have been for a conduct the reverſe. The Ruſſian government has eſtabliſhed its credit with the whole mercantile world, by its invariable adherence to juſtice and equity in all commercial laws and regulations. Frederick the Great was an Arabian ſhiek, who, at the head of a banditti, plundered the Poliſh caravans in their way to Dantzic and other ports.— Should Poland obtain a regular and free government, by the only method theſe can be obtained, under an hereditary line of ſovereigns, her agriculture will proſper; and Pruſſia has but to leſſen her impoſitions upon Poliſh produce, and to withdraw altogether her claims to Dantzic, in order to give foreigners greater confidence than they now have in truſting their property there, and to derive every benefit which ſhe has any right to expect from the produce of countries, and from the trade of a city not her own.

Britain, ſhould Pruſſia liſten to reaſon, will find a greater quantity of naval ſtores than formerly at the ports of Dantzic, Elbing,

bing, Koningſberg, and Memel. Nor can Ruſſia be hurt by this increaſed rivalſhip: it will in the end ſerve her, by creating a freſh ſpirit of induſtry. Poland can never produce one tenth part of the naval ſtores needed by the powers of Europe, nor in ſuch variety as Ruſſia. Ruſſia muſt, beſides, always underſell Poland in the prices of her commodities, as theſe have not to paſs through Pruſſia in their way to Peterſburgh, Riga, and Wyburg.

I was always at a loſs to conceive what the warlike preparations of Great Britain and Pruſſia meant; and inclined to think that they had a reference, ultimately, not to Turkey, but Poland. Her Imperial Majeſty had ſacrificed every thing to obtain a peace, notwithſtanding ſhe was the victor, and Turkey lying at her feet. Pruſſia, depending much upon Poland, no doubt wiſhed to ſeparate her from Ruſſian influence; and perhaps, by countenancing a revolution, or at leaſt by joining that party inimical to the Court of Peterſburgh, ſhe expected a return of favour in having Dantzic ceded to her. Ruſſia has

60,000 land forces, lately engaged in the Swedifh war, at liberty to act in any quarter: Pruffia diverted her attention from Poland, where fuch a formidable army might counteract the intended revolution, and frowned upon Livonia with a fuperior body of troops; and Britain, effectually to tie up the hands of Ruffia, prepared a fleet.

It is idle to pretend that thefe armaments were intended to oblige Ruffia to give up Oczakow, and to prevent her from having the command of the Nieper, without fuppofing that both the cabinets of Berlin and London are totally ignorant of their refpective interefts. Would the Court of Berlin contend that the navigation of the Niefter be free to Poland, to facilitate the exportation of Polifh produce by other channels than through the Pruffian rivers? Would the Court of London endeavour to have naval ftores brought to the Black fea, rather than to Dantzic and Memel, for exportation in Britifh veffels? What advantage could be derived from having to bring naval ftores from a greater diftance than at prefent? Nor is it poffible that our Court can be fo

defective

defective in political knowledge, as to have the least objections to the Russians having the free navigation, or even the command of the Nieper. Four Russian ports in the Baltic are traded to by one thousand sail of British vessels, which make upon an average two voyages in the year. Ten thousand British seamen are employed on board these vessels. Now what harm is to be apprehended from Russia, were she to open one hundred ports upon the Black sea, and give employment thereby to some thousands more of British ships and seamen? But, says the sagacious politician, Russia might learn to have shipping of her own, and rival ours. Grant that this consequence was to follow (and it cannot happen until Russia greatly increases in population and agriculture), yet Russia, without the art of magic, could not rival us so far as to divide the freightage of their own trade in respect of shipping in less than one or two hundred years; and at this period, upon the natural idea that commerce will increase with population and agriculture, we shall

still

ftill have an equal number employed, though the trade is divided, viz. five hundred to the Baltic, and five hundred to the Black fea.

Ruffia, labouring under many difadvantages, can never rival the fhipping of Britain; and, at any rate, Britons might behold without envy fo natural a ftruggle to participate with us in the wealth of their own country! We are rivalled by the fhipping of other countries in freightage to every quarter of the globe. Ruffia, if at all, could with difficulty, after many years, arrive at the power of dividing her own commerce.

Turn this fubject in every point of view, it plainly appears that the war with Turkey was not the caufe of our prefent interference, but to feparate Poland from Ruffia, and to obtain fome conceffions to the Court of Berlin.

The revolution of Poland, happen when it will, or the ftruggle for ruling its politics, has coft the lives of 200,000 Swedes, Ruffians, Turks and Germans. Whether the ftability of this revolution will fave an equal number

number of lives in its progrefs and continuance, is a doubtful queftion. All kingdoms and empires, equally ambitious, complain of each other's ambition. The powers inimical to Auftria and Ruffia fomented the Turkifh war, and encouraged Sweden to affift the Turks in order to render the conteft more bloody, and thereby more diftreffing to the two Imperial ambitious Courts. While this political procefs was going on, Poland offered a convenient field to complete the fcheme of humbling thofe mighty potentates. The peace with Sweden rendered an armament neceffary, and to have a guard at that poft which Guftavus had deferted. Thus it is plain that a conteft for political influence in Europe was the caufe of the war with Turkey, and of the armaments of Britain and Pruffia; not to obtain additional increafe of commerce, or of wealth. When are thefe contefts to end? When is the balance of power to be eftablifhed? Mankind are butchered one year to obtain peace for the fucceeding year. They are again called forth to be flaughtered upon account of fome

ſome ſmall hinge, or part of the weights of this balance being loſt. Again and again men are called upon to put to right with their blood, every alteration in the poſition of this political balance. It is uſed to keep mankind equally miſerable, not equally happy. Scales covered with blood will ſurely never meaſure out happineſs! The cabinets of princes have too long been the ſhambles of butchers, and this balance uſed there to weigh out the blood of the ſubjects. Princes ought now to take warning: *Their ſport is death to us*. While I am firmly convinced that mankind will proſper beſt under one chief, to prevent the ſtruggle for pre-eminence in numbers; to preſerve order; and to imitate, on earth, the government of Heaven itſelf; I am ſatisfied, too, that as we cannot have a God for our king, he ſhould be contented to rule by laws made by repreſentatives choſen freely and equally by the whole body of the people. That a repreſentative ſhould not have it in his power to betray the people, it is neceſſary that the people have the power to diſmiſs him;

him; and that the body of the people may not have it in their power to act capriciously, a representative shall continue to act for a certain time. To save the trouble of electing representatives whom the people approve of, every member of national assemblies or parliament should continue to act, until the people who have elected him declare their wish for his resignation at the conclusion of that fixed period.

To recur to our disputes with Russia: the ingratitude of that Court has been mentioned as an excuse for our taking a side against her. Were our ministers serious? I am at a loss to guess what is meant by the gratitude of nations. Is gratitude a word to be found in political dictionaries? Is there a court, is there a minister existing who is not grateful, or ungrateful, as it may best suit their present purposes of interest, or of ambition? Nothing but mutual assistance and advantages ever did, or ever will unite nations. Does not our minister in that political system, of which he is the sun, find a proportionate degree of returns of senators,

ſenators, the planets of this ſyſtem, according to the degree of warmth which he beſtows upon them? Do not ſome who are diſappointed in this expected heat, directly get out of the ſphere of his attraction? If miniſters find ſuch difficulty in engaging men, even in the ſervice of their own country, without making it for their individual intereſt to do ſo, why ſhould they affect ſo much ſurpriſe to find that one nation proves ungrateful to another? Ruſſia found an opportunity of ſhewing her conſequence: gratitude ſtood in the way; and the Ruſſian miniſter puſhed it aſide. How nearly do our miniſters copy this falſe example! They have ſeized an opportunity of retaliation; the commercial intereſts of Great Britain ſtood in the way, and they too were puſhed aſide.

During the conteſt of Ruſſia with Turkey, we paid the Ruſſians one third more money for her productions than we did immediately before the war. Was not this an annual drain to the pockets of the conſumers in Britain? This evil will not ceaſe with the war.

Ruſſia

Ruſſia has laid additional duties upon exports to ſupport the war, and which will remain to pay the debts contracted by the war, long after it has ceaſed: and as theſe duties are principally paid by Britiſh importers, we ſhall actually be obliged to pay to Ruſſia a conſiderable ſhare of her war expences. Beſides, the greater the loſſes that Ruſſia ſuſtains by war, the fewer hands will remain for the purpoſes of agriculture; the quantities of her commodities at market will be leſſened, and the prices increaſed. If miniſters cannot point out another country from which we can be ſupplied at the old or eaſier terms, at leaſt until Ruſſia has recovered from her diſtreſſes, was it not imprudent in our miniſters to have been acceſſary to them?

Ruſſia is the only country at this moment in the world that can ſupply us with the quantity which we want of naval ſtores, and no other can ſupply us, even with the ſmalleſt quantities, upon the ſame beneficial terms which Ruſſia has always done, and

ftill does. Ruffia neither fends us her produce nor carries away our manufactures with her own veffels. We have the whole bufinefs in our own hands, while the trade with other nations, as Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, is more than divided with us; and their fhips, befides, rival ours in freightage to all quarters. Our trade with Ruffia is attended with various other advantages. She is far behind us in manufactures: fhe fends her produce in a raw ftate to be manufactured by us, and takes them back again, paying us five, and one thoufand *per cent.* above what they coft us in the original purchafe.

I have confidered this fubject, without looking upon the ground of humanity.— The ear of ambition, and of cruel policy, hears not the fhrieks of the murdered in battle, or of the family of the peafant who is torn from their embrace to the work of death. Their eyes do not behold harvefts laid wafte, villages in flames. That minifter, bold in language, vigorous in his meafures,

meaſures, were he placed but for one day in the front of hoſtile armies, might ſhrink at the calamities which his intrigues bring down upon his fellow creatures.

LETTER LV.

Finnish Peasants.—Russian Post Houses.—Houses.—Livonia.—Livonians.—Russian Troops.

Livonia, February 1791.

I LEFT Petersburgh a few days ago in my way to Prussia, at one of whose sea-ports I mean to embark for Old England. The harbours of Muscovy are yet frozen up.—I must descend the globe some degrees of latitude, before I meet with an open sea. The Neva, and the gulph of Finland as far as the eye could reach, was a field of ice, and the ground and forests covered with snow.

I was fortunate enough to meet with a Livonian gentleman, an officer in the Russian service, just setting off for Narva. We agreed to travel together. We began our journey in the evening, and, flying over frozen lands and rivers, we had performed the

the beſt part of it by two o'clock the enſuing morning. I had not an opportunity before to obſerve the early induſtry of the Finlanders. They were at this time coming out of their huts, and through their ſmall windows we could perceive the females at work, to which they were lighted by a piece of burning timber ſtuck in the wall. This is a common, yet very dangerous practice in thoſe countries, where the houſes are all of timber. Candles are never uſed by the peaſantry, unleſs upon extraordinary occaſions. The faithful dog is the houſehold god of the peaſants in all countries: we hear his bark as we approach the villages, giving warning, to his maſter, of vagrant travellers. We enter the poſt-houſes as we arrive, and are always uſhered into the warm room prepared for travellers at the expence of government. The night was very cold, and the major treated me with a glaſs of brandy and a bit of brown bread from his ſtores. Every traveller carries his proviſions along with him, from the prince in gold lace to the boor in ſtraw

ſhoes. The poſt-houſes do not afford much accommodation; as it is not required. Few travellers ſtop but for horſes.

The poſt-houſes are ſituated at about twelve miles diſtance from each other, and each has a room appropriated for the reception of travellers gratis. Here, the weary wanderer, in cold weather, places his back againſt the ſtove, lights his pipe, unties his wallet, and refreſhes himſelf with bread and cheeſe. I went to ſee how the poſtillions paſſed their time—They were all aſleep upon the top of the ſtoves, and naked. The heat of their bed-room was unſufferable. The poor fellow whoſe turn it was to drive our ſledge was awaked by a blow upon his naked hip—he ſtarted—ſighed and ſcratched himſelf. He was ſoon dreſſed in his ſheep-ſkin, and came out from a warmth of at leaſt 20 degrees of Reaumur, to the open air of nearly as many degrees of cold. It was ſeveral minutes before he could reconcile himſelf to his change of ſituation; he ſoon forgot his warm cabin, turned cheerful, and, whipping his horſes to a gal-

lop,

lop, made the woods echo with his ſongs. In journeying through Eſthonia, the eye is agreeably relieved with alternate landſcapes of cultivation and farm-houſes, of woodlands and rivers. But the country is generally level. A dead ſilence reigns: no roaring cataract from a mountain's brow: the water ſleeps in its even channel. This province has evidently been gained from the ſea. The land ſeems deſerving of more careful huſbandmen. Rural cultivators wholly neglect the formation of incloſures, which might be made of the ſtones that incumber the ground.

At day-break we arrived at Yamburgh, and, paſſing the river ſtill firmly frozen, ſoon reached the poſt-houſe in the ſuburbs of Narva. Here we had our coffee, and my companion left me, to purſue a different route from mine. Our acquaintance had only commenced the day preceding, yet I felt myſelf melancholy upon his departure. He was cheerful and polite, and anxious to be ſerviceable to me though a foreigner. In the poſt-houſe was another young officer,

who, underſtanding that I was going towards Riga, aſked me to take a ſeat in his ſledge a part of the way. This gentleman preſented a different character. He at once betrayed a mean diſpoſition. Said he, "The ſledge being mine, it is proper that you pay for two horſes, I ſhall pay for the other." The captain, to give me a high idea of his power, told me that he would conduct me through Narva without being under the neceſſity of ſhewing my paſſport. He was one of the officers of the garriſon. The ſentinel at the guard-houſe, as uſual, demanded paſſports—the captain ſent his name to the officer upon guard, and we were allowed to proceed. This ſhews how matters may be done even in the midſt of an hoſtile garriſon in time of war, if one officer is not faithful to his truſt. But I believe the captain would not have ventured to have conducted me, had he not ſeen my paſſport.—Vanity, not treachery, was the motive of his conduct. From Narva to Riga, the road leads by the lake Pypus and the city of Dorpat in the province of Livonia. The firſt day's journey from

Riga

Riga presented a flat country, partly cleared and partly covered with forests; the whole as yet powdered with snow. Now begin the German post-houses, or post-houses kept by Germans, where one generally finds at twelve o'clock at noon the family at dinner, and where I as generally sit down and partake. My fellow-traveller, the captain, with his sledge and servant, went on a post farther.

A German post-house and the family within are curiosities. All buildings of German construction are made as nearly square as possible, no doubt to render the fabric more durable. The outside is simply plastered, without further ornament. The rooms at first sight announce, as it were, their alliance to the house, and are all square. The floors are covered with sand and fir-*leaves*, which, being swept every morning, and a fresh supply of sand and fir-leaves being strewed, serves instead of washing the floor—an operation never performed. The stove is built of brick, and *elegantly* covered with black tyles. The figure of it is square. The windows too are square, and the win-

dow

dow frames, by their great breadth, ingeniously contrived to save the expence of glass, though they may prevent the ingress of light. The post-master is dressed, as all Germans are when at home, in his gown, night-cap and slippers: a little dog plays at his foot, and a long pipe depends from his mouth. His wife and daughters are dressed in cloth gowns and petticoats, which, like the floor-dressing, save the expence of washing, and the trouble of cleanliness. Were they dressed in gauze, it would be better adapted to the hot air in which they breathe.

At this post-house, where I staid all night, early in the morning, I was awaked by a company of travellers. They consisted of a Cossac colonel, his lady, family, and retinue. I dressed myself, and entered the travellers' room, where they were at breakfast. The colonel's eldest boy asked me where I had come from, where I was going, what was my profession—Was I in the Russian service—was I a German, or a Frenchman, or a Russian?—He had never heard any thing of

of England. The colonel ſmiled, nor did he check the ſprightlineſs of his child. The Coſſacs ſpeak a language differing very little from the Ruſſian—You know they were originally from Poland.

The poſt-houſes provide travellers with carriages to the next poſt-houſe. I again proceeded forward upon my journey. The lake Pypus ſoon appeared before me, a frozen plain of ice. I was carried in the ſledge, acroſs a part of this inland ſea; and arriving at Nennal poſt-houſe, I found my companion the captain, who to the trade of war adds the more lucrative one of brandy-merchant. He has a conſiderable eſtate in Livonia, and has a quantity of liquors, manufactured from the grain of his farms, juſt landed at Nennal, brought hither in ſledges, upon the way to Narva, and no doubt to Revel and Peterſburgh. I took a ſecond farewell of my economical, induſtrious ſoldier and brandy-merchant. The Ruſſian army of ſeventy thouſand men are juſt now quartered in Livonia; were a ſmall party detached to Nennal, they might carry

away

away a comfortable draught for the whole of the troops. I again purſue my journey upon the lake Pypus. It begins to burſt its icy chains. There are cracks in many places. A vaſt number of ſledges paſs me, loaded with hay, proviſions, and other commodities.

Surrounded by an icy ſea, frozen lands, and bleak ſkies, I feel hungry, and have untied my wallet, and drawn the cork from my bottle. I am eating a ſlice of cold ham, and drinking your health in rum. It is not the faſhion in this country to adulterate liquors with water. At night I arrive at the city of Dorpat, very ſnugly ſituated in a ditch.

Dorpat is not far diſtant from the lake Pypus. I deſcended into a plain from a riſing ground near this city; from the plain I deſcended into the hollow cavity upon both ſides of which Dorpat ſtands; and upon the other ſide the plain continues. Livonia is a flat country; yet the land preſents often a gently ſwelling ſurface, though it never riſes into hills. The lake Pypus gives birth

birth to ſeveral rivers, which take their courſe through, and fertilize the province, as well as afford convenient communication with the ſea-ports.

Dorpat appears to be a ſmall town, and ſeems very irregularly built. It conſiſts of wooden and brick houſes. As it was growing dark when I entered, you muſt be contented with this deſcription. I lodged at the poſt-houſe, and in the morning continued my journey, but in a new manner. The ground in this lower latitude is no longer covered with ſnow to ſuch a thickneſs as to render travelling in ſledges practicable. The motion of a wheel carriage has a ſtrange effect upon the body, after having been accuſtomed to ſlide along upon a hurdle.

The Livonians reſemble ſo many prieſts: their clothes are generally of a black colour: they likewiſe ſhave; but in other reſpects they appear to be the ſame people with the Finlanders. They are not however ſo polite as the Fins—I ſeldom noticed them lifting their hats, either to one another, or to travellers upon the road. They are a ſoft-

looking harmlefs generation, and, I have learned, are much depreffed by their lords, to whom they are no other than flaves. Livonia upon this fide Dorpat is lefs crowded with woods than it is adjoining to the lake Pypus. This part of the country however bears no marks either of that wonderful fertility or cultivation which are faid to prevail in the inland parts of it. The inclofures are few, and wretchedly executed; the farm-houfes mean-looking, and the farm-yards ill ftored with ricks of grain. As I drew near to Wolmar, the woods again fpread over this province, and I remarked that the trees were of a larger fize as I increafed my diftance from the pole. It furprifes me that the northern nations fhould have ever paid any worfhip to the fun, fince they derive fo fmall benefit from this *deity*. At Wolmar, a fmall town, I found colonel Fanfhaw's regiment in quarters. The roads are filled with troops, and every village is a camp. I had the honour to convey a recruit from his native hut to Wolmar —He had yet his native drefs. His wife, a

young girl, ſat upon the baggage cart, which ſhe drove—the wheels of the baggage cart broke, and the lady ſhrieked and tumbled—the recruit ran to her aſſiſtance—my chariotteer, who was brother to the recruit, begged that I would have patience to wait until the baggage cart was repaired. The recruit quickly ſet matters to rights with a nail and a rope, and he again ſeated himſelf beſide his brother. I am thus aiding and abetting Her Imperial Majeſty againſt the Pruſſians. I muſt paſs through Pruſſia, and hope that none will inform the Pruſſian monarch of my having been an active agent for his enemies. Theſe two great powers are frowning at each other. The ſmall province of Courland alone divides them.

The nearer I approached Riga, the multitude of ſoldiers increaſed. The night drew her curtain before I had ended this day's journey. I paſſed a river upon a raft of trees, in the dark. The poſt-houſe, where I ſtopped for the evening, was upon the oppoſite banks, and Riga within fifteen miles. I found Riga fortified with new lines of circumvallation,

cumvallation, which muſt have been done at a vaſt expence. The deſert plain around affording little elſe than ſand; the turf, of which the lines or ramparts are compoſed, muſt have been brought from a conſiderable diſtance. The extent of theſe lines will require at leaſt ten thouſand men to defend them.

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LETTER LVI.

Of the Ruſſians.—Of the Germans, the Beauty of their Women.—Maſquerade at Riga.—Of the German Muſic.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Germans.—Of the River Dwina, and Harbour of Riga.

Riga, February 1791.

WHEREVER I travel, my firſt inquiries relate to the cuſtoms, manners, and amuſements of the people; by which alone their real characters are to be eſtimated. Man, driven by neceſſity, rather than by choice, to divers profeſſions of life, cannot fairly be drawn while covered with theſe maſques: but, in his amuſements, he is naked, and a good painter has no difficulty in delineating his figure.

I ſee a few Ruſſians, and a few only, in

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the ſtreets, walking about in their ſheep-ſkins and long beards. They are ſtrangers in this new corner of their empire. They are only beginning to pitch their tents upon the ſhores of the Baltic. Peter I. drove them out of their woods, to breathe the ſea air upon the coaſts of the Finland and Livonian Gulphs. The Germans are generally deſcribed as a grave, phlegmatic people; but, reverſing the order of animal nature, they revive in the cold ſeaſon of the year. The Livonian gentry are now in town, and the aſſemblage of beauty and elegance is far beyond what I expected to meet with here. Perhaps there is no town in Europe of its ſize, that contains ſo many handſome women as Riga. I noticed, however, with regret, that rouge formed a component part of their beauty. The Germans are fond of pomp, and there are few among them who do not live fully to the extent of their incomes. I have been at a maſquerade ball. I went in the morning to procure a ticket. "But you muſt have two," ſaid the retailer of theſe pleaſure-permits, "or you cannot

cannot ſup." To eat, is a principal part of a German as well as of an Engliſh entertainment. So this but coſt me another dollar. My eagerneſs to ſee a polite aſſembly in this corner of the world brought me an hour too ſoon. This, however, gave me an opportunity of ſurveying the company as they entered—thoſe who came to laugh, or to be laughed at. The great people, as uſual, played at cards; and the jocund and gay danced, and went about diſtributing their jeſts among the ſober dominos—nuns and wanton widows, old maids and coquettes, harlequins, Dutch ſkippers, and ballad ſingers.—There goes a Polander, followed by a Pruſſian, a Muſcovite, and an Auſtrian, at all of whom he ſquints with a watchful eye. There is a ſmart Ruſſian girl, playing at hazard with a couple of Turks. There is one attempting to be a wit, and another to act the fool. Here is a fortune-teller; a young beau with a long beard—*O fortunate puer*! he has got hold of the hand of the prettieſt girl in the aſſembly. I do not well underſtand German; he cer-

tainly tells her to be virtuous, and that every good thing will follow of courſe.

The ſignal for ſupper is thrown out from the gallery—Tranſparent letters inform the company, that thoſe who have tickets for the firſt courſe may file off to the right. The German muſic enchants me. It would be imprudent in the moſt rigid Platoniſt to dance at a German ball, where the eye and the ear are both ſo raviſhed, where ſuch ſweet ſounds from the orcheſtra give new pleaſure to the ſight of lovely females, and both to thought. There were preſent at this maſquerade ſome of the firſt rank; and ſtars and ribbons, the maſques of a court, were ſported in different corners of the rooms.

The public aſſemblies are frequent, and conducted by an aſſociation of the gentlemen of Riga. But in every private houſe through Germany there is, during the continuance of ice and ſnow, a dance or a concert, three or four times a week.—Every German, male or female, can perform upon ſome muſical inſtrument or other: and

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wherever they meet, they inſtinctively look around them in ſearch of a violin, a flute, or piano-forte. The maſter of the feaſt, if there be any ſtranger in his houſe, makes him an offer of his beſt violin, and is thunderſtruck if the gueſt is ignorant of *ſa la mi.* A German is ſeldom without a fiddle or a pipe in his hand. He haſtes from buſy ſcenes to his family at home, undreſſes, and, wrapping himſelf up in his night-cap and night-gown, ſeizes his pipe, and ſits down, like a demi-god, in a cloud of his own raiſing. If he is again called out, it is with evident chagrin that he parts with his tobacco and ſlippers: he is, at this time, uncommonly ſlow in his motions; but when he returns to his chamber, his wig and coat are off in a twinkling, and his night-cap reſumed. With all this, he is very polite, and the night-cap is pulled off to every viſitor. But the viſitor ſometimes does not perceive this mark of civility, as the night-cap is frequently hid in the ſmoke. An univerſal civility, indeed, eſ-

pecially to the ladies, whom no gentleman paſſes, known or unknown, without ſaluting them, prevails throughout the whole of this country.

Several Britiſh ſhips are in the river, taking in cargoes of timber, flax, and hemp, for London and other ports. The river Dwina affordsa ſafe and noble harbour for ſhipping; but, like moſt rivers, it has a dangerous bar at its mouth; and its banks, formed entirely of looſe ſand, are ſupported, near Riga, by a ſort of baſket work of bruſh wood. There is no proper foundation for building ſtone piers—the current would ſoon undermine every ſuch erection. With all theſe inconveniencies, Riga is in commerce and in wealth the firſt port of the Baltic.

Yet Riga is not a large town. I think the inhabitants are calculated at twelve thouſand; four fifths of whom are Germans; the remainder Engliſh, Swedes, French, and other nations. The ſuburbs contain nearly as many more inhabitants,

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and their number daily increaſes with Ruſſians in ſearch of commerce. It is the reſort too, in winter, of the Livonian nobles and gentlemen; and at this ſeaſon there is a very genteel and agreeable ſociety. Count Vietinghoff has built a handſome theatre and aſſembly-rooms, at his own expence. He is the patron, too, of the rural arts, and has ſeveral farms for the improvement of agriculture. This nobleman is deſervedly beloved by all, and in high eſtimation with her Imperial Majeſty, in whoſe councils he holds an exalted rank.

Count Brown, an Iriſhman, governor general of Riga, Revel, and Narva, and of the provinces of Eſthonia and Livonia, entered at a very early period into the Ruſſian ſervice, in which he has now turned grey. The count has undergone every hardſhip of war. Upwards of fifty years ago, in the war with Turkey, he was taken priſoner, and ſold among the Turks for a ſlave. He was redeemed at the interference of the French Ambaſſador at the Ottoman court. Catharine II. at her ac-

ceſſion to the throne, found many Britons in both her army and navy: ſhe continued to them the favour and diſtinction which they had uniformly received from the reign of Alexis Michaelowitz, father of Peter the Great, and placed them in the moſt important ſtations. Ruſſia, prior to the reign of Alexis, had little intercourſe with the reſt of Europe; indeed it was then almoſt entirely an Aſiatic ſtate. Novogorod, an inland city, and not far diſtant from Riga, upon the frontiers of the Muſcovite empire, roſe, from its peculiarly happy ſituation, and in ſpite of the ignorance of deſpotiſm, at an early period to be ranked among the Hanſe-towns. It was the medium, not only of the Ruſſian, but of the Indian commerce. Its wealth and greatneſs were proverbial—"Nought can be greater than God and Novogorod!"

To this mart merchants came in crowds from every corner of Europe. The revolutions occaſioned by the conteſts of the Ruſſian Princes who diſputed for empire, as well as the diſcovery of the paſſage to India

dia by the cape of Good Hope, overturned Novogorod; and the conqueſt of Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia, in the preſent century, by the Ruſſians, completed its deſtruction, by affording more convenient commercial towns at the mouths of the Neva and the Dwina.

Archangel, lying upon the White Sea, had long before belonged to Ruſſia. It was only a mean fiſhing village; and, hemmed in by the frozen North Sea, ſeemed to forbid every attempt to hold a commercial intercourſe with foreign nations. The Ruſſians, without any knowledge of navigation, never thought of Archangel. In the reign of Elizabeth of England, and of John II. of Ruſſia, a ſmall ſquadron was fitted out by the Engliſh government, under the command of commodore Willoughby, to make diſcoveries to the north. The commodore's ſhip, with every perſon on board, periſhed in thoſe inclement latitudes: one only of the ſquadron, after combating with dreadful ſtorms, was driven by chance into the bay of Archangel. The Ruſſians conſidered

ſidered theſe new comers as the natives of another world. Intelligence ſoon reached the Czar John, at Muſcow, who gave orders to have the officers conveyed to him, that he might examine in perſon from what part of the earth or ocean they had come.

Captain Chancellor, the maſter, had with him the commiſſion of his ſovereign, written in different languages. The Czar was ſoon ſatisfied; and, from converſations which paſſed between the Czar and the Engliſh, by the aſſiſtance of foreigners at Muſcow, the idea of commencing a correſpondence directly with England firſt ſtruck the Ruſſian nation. Archangel was yearly from this date frequented by Engliſh ſhips and merchants. John correſponded by letters with our ſovereigns; and, anxious to encourage this firſt dawn of foreign trade, which had never before been carried on directly by the Ruſſians, granted uncommon privileges to his new allies.

The foreign merchants or agents at Novogorod, which ſtill kept up its head, jealous

lous of this new channel of commerce, did every thing in their power to diſſuade the Emperor from ſhewing ſuch countenance to the Engliſh, without effect, Archangel increaſed in trade and wealth. The Ruſſians, proud of this new opening, crowded to Archangel with their commodities; and the Engliſh choſe to bring the Ruſſian produce from this port, however dangerous the navigation, rather than ſubmit to pay the higher prices put upon them by the factors at Novogorod, and other Hanſe-towns, who monopolized the Ruſſian as well as moſt other trades. Thus, the firſt dawn of our connection with Ruſſia daily ſpreading; both nations, ſenſible of its importance, with equal alertneſs and willingneſs entered into treaties of friendſhip. England found in Ruſſia a connection which rapidly bore her up to a ſuperiority over the Hanſe-towns, who were not only great in trade, but in naval power.—Ruſſia afforded the moſt favourite articles to Britons—the materials for rendering their navy formidable to all the world. Alexis, the ſucceſſor

successor of Ivan, father of Peter I. continued that friendly intercourse begun by Elizabeth and Ivan II. Charles I. corresponded with Alexis. This familiar intercourse gave rise to a sincere personal attachment, so seldom found among kings! After the death of the unfortunate Charles, a number of Scots emigrated to Russia; and hence a number of Scottish surnames are found among the higher ranks of the Russians, at this day. These refugees entered chiefly into the army, and greatly contributed, by their knowledge both of commercial and military affairs, to the aggrandizement of the empire that had afforded them an asylum. It is probable that they gave Alexis the first idea of asserting his claims to the provinces upon the Baltic. It is not to be supposed, that a nation just beginning a direct intercourse with foreigners could have a just idea of what steps were necessary to increase their commerce. Besides, the difficulty to be surmounted in conquering such valuable provinces from the Swedes, possessing a well disciplined army,

army, and a ſtrong fleet—provinces, upon whoſe ſafety the very exiſtence of Sweden depended—could not be ſurmounted, even in idea, but by ſome perſons who, ſenſible of the bleſſings of commerce and the happy ſituation of theſe countries, ſaw that every thing ought to be hazarded by Ruſſia, in procuring what alone could render her a maritime and trading power. Ruſſia had often before had theſe provinces lying at her mercy; but a want of this knowledge of commerce made her indifferent about the dominion over lands in no way ſo fruitful as the vaſt regions ſhe already poſſeſſed.

Even Peter the Great had little knowledge of thoſe machines which make commerce move, and ſupport it. He muſt have this matter clearly explained to him, before he ventured his life and his crown in ſo hazardous an undertaking, in which he had not only to conquer the regular forces of an ancient and brave nation with a mob of peaſantry, but to conquer too a ſtill more formidable barrier, the averſion of ſavage minds to civilization and trade. Peter led

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on a rabble, unwilling to fight, againſt an army of Charles XII. of Sweden, the greateſt hero that ever lived; againſt an army fluſhed with recent victory over their moſt inveterate and powerful enemies, the Danes; an army trembling with contempt at the Ruſſian emperor's attack, and who drove before them 50,000 Muſcovites with 5000 Swediſh troops, at the firſt onſet! Charles XII. committed one fault, which loſt him all his fame, and the beſt part of his kingdom. He deſpiſed his enemies, and expoſed himſelf, upon every occaſion, to fight under every diſadvantage. He had ſeveral foes to contend with, whoſe armies ſeparately were more numerous than his. He imprudently divided his army, to oppoſe them ſeparately, and at a great diſtance from each other. The conſequences which happened, were naturally to be expected. Charles XII., had he kept his brave Swedes together, would have gained all the victories he did gain; and, without being at laſt defeated, he would have preſerved his kingdom, and made poſterity venerate his name.

One falſe ſtep ruined him. Peter I. built his new capital upon the ruins of Sweden. No wonder that the Swedes continue to behold with the keeneſt anguiſh the decided ſuperiority attained by Ruſſia, erected upon ſuch foundations.

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LETTER LVII.

Extent and Variety of the Ruſſian Empire.—Courland.—Inns in Courland.—Mittau.—Neceſſary Subordinations of Ranks.—Reflections on Liberty and Tyranny.—State of Agriculture in Courland.—Courlanders.—Polanders.—Poliſh Pruſſia.—Memel.

Courland, March 1791.

I BEGAN my journey from Riga through Courland (a country which I have long wiſhed to ſee) laſt Saturday. The Dwina was at this time covered with looſe ice. With much difficulty we effected a paſſage acroſs the river. There are no bridges over the rivers in Livonia. The paſſengers are carried over in ſmall rafts of trees, which are pulled from one ſide to the other by means of a rope fixed to poles ſtuck in the banks.

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The difference of latitude between Peterſburg and Riga is not quite three degrees. The country around the firſt is ſtill covered with ſnow, and the Ruſſians are driving in ſledges upon the gulph of Finland. At Riga the ſnow is melted, and the Dwina will be open for commerce in a few days. But this variation of climate in the Ruſſian empire is hardly worth remarking, in comparifon to what is experienced between more diſtant parts of it. It would be curious at this moment to view the face of nature and the employment of the Ruſſians at Peterſburgh in 60 degrees, and of the Ruſſians in 44 degrees. This wonderful empire is an epitome of the whole world; an extenſive collection of deſerts, oceans, rivers, hot and cold climates, barren and fruitful countries, where even the hardy pine-tree juſt exiſts upon the Finland ſhores, and where the mulberry flouriſhes, and feeds the ſilk-worm, upon the borders of the Caſpian.

I imagined that, in my former letters, I had given you a long and particular account of Ruſſia and Ruſſians. I find now that I am

am only entered upon the ſubject; and you muſt conſider every thing I have yet written, as only an introduction to the accounts which I had promiſed. Before I take leave of this ſubject for this time, I will aſſure you that the accounts of the Ruſſians contained in theſe letters are drawn from actual obſervations, and muſt neceſſarily contain ſomething new of this celebrated nation. Moſt of our travellers have been diſpoſed to abuſe this people; and, indeed, at firſt ſight one is apt to feel a prejudice againſt them. A reſidence of ſome years is therefore more requiſite to judge of an uncivilized, than of a civilized nation; for the ſame reaſon that it requires a longer attention to judge of the value of a diamond out of the mine, than of one out of the hands of the lapidary.

For the purpoſe of reviewing Courland to the beſt advantage, I have altered my mode of travelling. For although I poſted along only in the day through Livonia, and halted where any object occurred worthy of obſervation, yet I paſſed too quickly to take a proper ſurvey of any other object than the

the face of nature; which alone can be obſerved in ſuch journies, unleſs the traveller ſojourns for months or years. My new carriage is a Pruſſian waggon drawn by ſix horſes that would not diſgrace the ſtate-coach of an emperor. The communication is yet open between Ruſſia and Pruſſia, and this waggon, with ſeveral others, had conveyed various commodities from Koningsberg to Riga.

The frontiers of Ruſſia extend a few miles beyond the ſouth banks of the Dwina, where we entered Courland. It was dark when the waggoner told me that the frontier-gate was at hand, and that I muſt come before the Ruſſian officer to ſhew my paſſport. This I inſtantly complied with. The officer had a ſmall houſe cloſe to the gate, where ſtood a ſentinel, and, no doubt, ſome military conſtables were at hand to enforce obedience to the regulations preſcribed to itinerants. The officer entered my name and paſſport in his book. He aſked if I had any Ruſſian money. I ſhewed him ſome Alberts-dollars. The carrying of Ruſſian

coin out of the empire is prohibited. Having ſatisfied him that I had no rubles or copics in my purſe, the gate was opened for me. It is a long pole thrown acroſs the road. A wide-rolling ocean, or a chain of Alps and Apennines ſhould divide kingdoms and empires. A pole of timber acroſs a road is a poor barrier againſt the ambition of princes.

We arrived at the firſt ſtage in Courland at a late hour. The waggoners do not ſtop at the poſt-houſes. There are inferior public-houſes for thoſe who have not the honour to be drawn by poſt-horſes. We entered, with the waggons and cattle, at the gavel of the houſe. A large gate admits not only human travellers, but their dapples and baggage, under a hoſpitable roof. One half of the houſe is the ſtable; the other, divided from it by partitions, is the tavern. Here a long room, with tables and forms of the ſame length, accommodates the lower orders of the people. The humble pedeſtrian unties his wallet, and eats his black bread and ſalt; and making a bed of his baggage, if he has any, upon the floor, repoſes himſelf for the night.

night. He pays nothing for houſe-room; perhaps a glaſs of thick beer from the landlord encroaches upon his purſe one farthing. Not ſo the rich waggoner. The long table is loaded with ſmoking viands, oppoſite to the place where he is ſeated; the porkers bleed; and the company might be miſtaken for Penelope's ſuitors.

Beyond the long-room is a ſmaller one furniſhed with tables, chairs and beds: but to this elegant place none except quality reſort; that is, any perſon who has money to pay for, and is luxurious enough to require, a comfortable ſleep. The landlady did me the honour to uſher me into it. This room being ſeldom occupied is ſeldom heated. The landlady ſeemed to think that the diſtinguiſhed honour of ſleeping in it would compenſate for the cold damp air which ſeized me at my entrance. I returned inſtinctively, and ſeated myſelf by the maſter waggoner; thus preſerving heat and conſequence together.

I again ſeat myſelf in my waggon, on a bundle of ſtraw. The carriers diſplay their

whips; the horſes move forward; and their bells, ſounding on their necks, ſalute the morning. We arrive within ſight of Mittau, the capital, ſituated upon a plain, and upon the banks of a ſmall river. We are ferried acroſs this river by means of a raft, and landed nearly at the ducal palace, which ſtands upon a ſmall eminence without the city. It was Sunday, and the inhabitants were picking their way through dirty ſtreets to church. They ſpeak the German language, and are, no doubt, *ab origine* Germans. The metropolis of Courland has nothing to diſtinguiſh it but the palace, and this palace is in ruins. I was ſurpriſed to ſee Ruſſian ſoldiers here: their green uniforms attracted my attention as the features of an old acquaintance. The Duke's ſoldiers are clothed in blue, ſimilar to the uniform of our artillery. They were changing guard at the palace. My curioſity prompted me to follow them; they marched into the ſquare which the palace ſurrounds. This building, which they guard, is habitable in one of its wings; the other affords con-

conveniency for an Engliſh ſmith's ſhop. The Duke of Courland reſides at a palace in the country, no doubt in better repair.

I left Mittau in diſguſt. I expected to have ſeen ſomething, and was diſappointed. Notwithſtanding the ſeaſon of the year, this province every where ſhows marks of fertility and the higheſt cultivation. The fields are all ſurrounded by ditches, which both ſerve the purpoſe of a hedge, and are a neceſſary drain to ſo flat a ſoil. The young rye crop is already ſhading the plains with green. Courland has an agreeable diverſity of woodland, paſture, and cultivated grounds; and the ſhepherd and the huſbandman have the country nearly divided betwixt them. This delightful province would ſeem not to belong to northern regions: the pine-tree alone diſcovers its native north. Amidſt the ice and ſnow of Scandinavia the ever-verdant pine ſhoots its head above them, as if it were to aſſure the inhabitants that nature is not dead, and that ſpring will again return!

It is a melancholy conſideration that, while I view the fertile boſom of Courland,

I ſee too the laborious peaſant covered with rags, and depreſſed with ill treatment and poverty. I know that the Duke of Courland is oppoſed in plans for the good of the province, by proud and refractory nobles; but as I witneſſed ſome things which muſt have been neglected by the Duke himſelf, matters in which he could not have been counteracted by any perſon, I am inclined to think that the nobility and gentry are not entirely to blame. The poverty of the Finlanders, when one looks at their country, is eaſily accounted for without attributing it to the chains of ſlavery; but in Courland the poverty of the natives inſtantly conveys the idea of tyranny, and places the haughty noble, who does ſo much to inſult mankind, in the moſt odious light. Was this globe created to ſupport a haughty and luxurious few; and were the reſt of mankind created to be their ſlaves, and for the purpoſe of being oppreſſed and hooted at? The God of the univerſe certainly only permits ſuch evils, to promote a greater good, to ſucceed in the due courſe of things. Yet men are not born equal; we inherit from nature differ-

ent degrees of ability and virtue; and it is to be lamented that the ranks in ſociety are not diſtinguiſhed by ſuch gradations alone. Society cannot exiſt without diſtinction of rank; and ſociety and rank ſhould have a chief, to preſerve order in them. A good king is the repreſentative of the Deity upon earth. He ought to govern by the laws; or, in other words, he is under the law. When a king has not the power of acting contrary to the law, his people enjoy liberty, becauſe the laws by which they are governed are, in civilized countries, made by the voice of the people. Uncivilized nations cannot have this liberty, becauſe to make laws ſuppoſes the makers to poſſeſs wiſdom and reaſon. Uncivilized nations are to be governed by the laws of the ſovereign and his counſellors, who are ſuppoſed to copy them from the laws of happier countries. The abuſe of this power in the ſovereign and his counſellors, is tyranny; as it is likewiſe, when they endeavour to retain it longer than is requiſite, or when the civilization of the people takes place, from intercourſe

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with civilized countries, and enables them to conſtitute laws for themſelves. Tyranny, therefore, does not imply the having a chief or king; nor liberty, to be without one. The people who permit the abuſe of laws are their own tyrants.

The ſituation of the Courland peaſant is truly lamentable; not becauſe he is a ſlave, but becauſe he is neither fed nor clothed, amidſt that plenty with which Heaven has bleſſed his native plains.

The improved ſtate of cultivation in Courland is owing to the introduction of German farmers; ſome of whom have farms upon their own accounts, but in general are employed by the proprietors of the land, who prefer farming their eſtates, and do not permit their peaſants, as is the practice in Ruſſia, to be their tenantry. Theſe being unſkilful in the art of agriculture are of ſmall ſervice to themſelves or to their lords. The Courland peaſants are employed, by the farmers or by the proprietors, as labouring hinds, having a ſmall portion of land for themſelves, beſides the pittance of

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wages they ſometimes receive from the farmers, who ſtipulate for the ſlaves in the ſame manner as for the farm. The peaſants belong to the lands, whether theſe are ſold or let. The produce of Courland finds a ready market at Riga, Windaw, and Libaw. The two latter are ſea-ports upon the coaſt of this province. I have ſtopped to ſurvey the different proviſion-markets at Riga; and one day expreſſing my aſtoniſhment that Livonia ſhould pour ſuch variety and ſuch plenty into the town, the venders ſhook their heads—" Ah," ſaid they, " it is not " from Livonia we are ſupplied, it is from " Courland: we ſhould neither have provi- " ſions in plenty, nor good in quality, nor " cheap, *unleſs we had Courland!*" This was their expreſſion. Livonia is certainly not ſo much, if at all, inferior to Courland in point of ſoil and climate: the different management of the lands occaſions the finer appearance and the greater fertility of the latter. This points out to the Livonian landholders an eaſy way to increaſe their revenues. Unfortunate it is, indeed, that

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the conduct of the Courland gentry affords not an example, at the ſame time, of humanity to the peaſants; whoſe ſituation is not bettered by the larger crops and revenues derived from the eſtates.

In all my journey through Courland I ſee very few gentlemen's ſeats. The farm-houſes are numerous; and the varied landſcapes of wood-land and cultivated ground, in many parts ſwelling into ſmall hills, afford the moſt delightful entertainment to the admirers of nature. In ſhort, I am in love with this paradiſe; and, were it the land of freedom, I ſhould wiſh to pitch my tent ſomewhere near the ſea-ſhore of Courland for life. For, however greatly I admire rural beauties, I wiſh to have, from my rural abode, a proſpect of the ocean: purling ſtreams, and cataracts, and lakes do not ſatisfy me; they are, at beſt, miniature figures.

Our caravan arrived upon the banks of the river Windaw. Here I noticed a number of carts loaded with grain and other commodities, going to the ſea-ports. Among theſe were ſome from Riga loaded with

caviar and other Ruſſian articles for Memel and Koningſberg: they were attended by a Ruſſian factor, or *chargé d'affaires.* I conſidered him as an acquaintance, and we converſed upon the buſineſs he was engaged in. I aſked this gentleman to let me have a little of the caviar; but he would not break upon a caſk, leſt the whole ſhould have been ſpoiled in obliging me. I have formerly ſaid, that a Ruſſian is willing to oblige, even when he expects no reward; but the lower ranks ſeldom venture any hazardous attempt to ſerve one, if more money is to be loſt than made by it. We were ferried acroſs the rivers in our way, as uſual, upon rafts. The day was ſtormy when we paſſed the river Windaw. The rafts were not drawn from one ſide to the other by a rope fixed to poles in the oppoſite banks, but puſhed along with poles. The ropes are, no doubt, diſuſed, as they might interrupt the navigation of the river by lighters to and from Windaw with articles of commerce.

The Courlanders appear to be the ſame people

people with the Livonians, both in cuſtoms and language, as far as my ſhort acquaintance with them enabled me to judge. Depreſſion and poverty are diſtinguiſhable in their faces and dreſs. Whether it be owing to ſtupidity or haughtineſs, I do not know, but I obſerved that neither the Livonians nor Courlanders lifted their hats to ſtrangers or to each other, as is common among the Finland nations.

The Germans form in Courland, as in Eſthonia and Livonia, the middling ranks of the people, between the peaſant and the lord of the ſoil. They are the merchants, handicrafts, ſhop-keepers, and farmers. A few Jews endeavour likewiſe to pick up a little money in Courland. I ſaw ſeveral at Mittau; and yeſterday one ſolitary child of Iſrael paſſed me in the woods. He had no ſhoes to his feet, but very probably a good ſum of money in his pocket. Ruſſia is not infeſted with this race of money-worms: the great cities of Poland and Denmark, including Norway, are filled with them. The Ruſſians are themſelves Jews in every thing

thing regarding money: the Iſraelites probably found nothing to be gained among them.

We arrived at a country town near Libaw. Before we entered Libaw, we paſſed the end of a lake, only ſeparated from the Baltic by a ſand-bank. A great part of this lake appeared covered with ſwans, and it is of ſeveral miles in length. I never before ſaw ſuch a numerous collection of birds together. They made the air ring with their croaking—a ſtrange ſalute to the northern ſpring, which has commenced in Courland! A few days ſince I left Peterſburgh and the ſurrounding ſeas and lands frozen and covered with ſnow; the thaw met me near Riga, where it had opened the Dwina. In Courland no fragments of winter remain. Spring hailed me as I paſſed the barrier-gate dividing Ruſſia from this province. Were I to continue my journey with quick expedition down the globe to the line, I ſhould meet with all the ſeaſons in the courſe of a few weeks.

Libaw is the principal ſea-port of Courland. Here is an excellent harbour. The channel

channel between the Baltic and the lake forms it. The exports from Libaw are the produce of Courland, grain and timber. The firſt article is generally taken by Hollanders and Lubeckers. Few Britiſh ſhips come here. The neighbouring port of Memel in Pruſſia affords a greater variety and quantity of commodities of trade, and conſequently is chiefly frequented by Britiſh veſſels. I found, however, two Britiſh veſſels here, taking in timber, grain, flax, flax-ſeed, &c. I went on board; and, making ſome enquiries, I found they were loaded from the warehouſes of an Engliſh merchant, the only one in Libaw. I waited upon this gentleman. He was with his family at dinner. I accepted of his invitation, and dined with them. We had a concert in the evening, in which Mr. King, our entertainer, played the flute, and His Pruſſian Majeſty's conſul, Monſ. Zimmermann, the firſt fiddle. Several of the German gentlemen, the principal inhabitants of the town, likewiſe performed upon the violin, and the lovely Mrs. King upon the piano

forte.

forte. At fuch concerts the entertainer feldom engages any profeffional muficians; his guefts, if they are Germans, are all muficians.

Derwindaw, not far diftant from Libaw, and to the northward, is the other principal port of Courland, and from which the fame articles of commerce, already noticed, are exported. Libaw is a pretty large town, but chiefly confifts of wooden houfes, of one, and never more than two, ftories in height. The inhabitants are all Germans. The native Courlanders are not yet arrived to the honour of being citizens. They labour for that crop which employs the German fettlers in exporting or in working into different manufactures.

The road from Libaw to Memel is fimply the fea fhore of the Baltic. I have feated myfelf upon the top of the waggon, to enjoy the fea air, and the extenfive and grand profpect around me. The fun has exhaled the mift which hung over the ocean, and difcovered the fhips of various nations fteering for different harbours. They muft not

yet attempt a paſſage up the gulph of Finland farther than Revel upon the Ruſſian, and Sweaborg or Helſingfors upon the Swediſh ſide. The eagerneſs of avarice will not, however, wait for the diſſolving of ice, and many veſſels are loſt in navigating the Baltic at too early a ſeaſon. The luxurious in Peterſburgh ſometimes give a very high price for foreign proviſions, when theſe turn ſcarce in winter: lemons, oranges, and other luxuries, at ſuch times, are brought to Revel, and carried by land to the Ruſſian metropolis, and even from the Courland and Pruſſian ſea-ports. The expence of land carriage is not high, and facilitates trade all the year.

The waggons move very ſlowly along the ſandy beach. I walk by the rolling ſurge, and collect peebles and amber. The tavern where we ſtop, is built upon a bank of ſand cloſe upon the ocean. I forgot to mention to you that I have two fellow-travellers in the waggon. They are two Romans who have been diſpoſing of ſome little articles in Ruſſia, Courland, and Germany:

ny: they have ventured further than all the force of antient Rome ever dared, and with the aſſiſtance of no other weapons than pins, buckles, ſciſſars, razors, and muſlin handkerchiefs. So much for the arts of peace. I have the honour to carve at this hotel *ſur mer* for my two companions. We talk German together, and they have recorded to me their adventures at Pleſkow, Mittaw, Libaw, and other places.

We entered Poland not far from this hotel. The Poles were fiſhing among the ſurge for ſhrimps with ſmall nets. There is a national character appears at firſt ſight. The Poles have a near reſemblance to the Coſſacs: tall and handſome in their perſons, of a ſwarthy complexion. They ſhave their heads, leaving only the hair upon the crown. They are reſpectful in their demeanour, but have at the ſame time a majeſtic deportment. *Every Pole looks like a gentleman in diſtreſs.* I have ſeen them formerly, and the ſame idea always ſtrikes me. Their dreſs likewiſe reſembles the Coſſac: a looſe coat, wide hanging ſleeves, and a ſort of trowſer breeches.

The drefs of the women is very antique, bearing a fimilarity to the Ruffian, and as fine and richly ornamented with gold-lace as poffible. The landlady of the houfe at the town of Polengen, where we arrived in the evening, was decorated in all her moveable wealth. Her head was wholly covered with an embroidered napkin; and other parts of her drefs were fo rich and tawdry, that one might have miftaken her for our Lady of Loretto.

Polengen is famous for the amber collected near it, and which conftitutes an article of commerce. The town is fmall, or rather it is a very inconfiderable village, though it has the honour to bear the name of the country it belongs to. Polengen, or Pologne, is fituated near the fea-fhore. Leaving this, we foon enter into Pruffia. The country around is flat and fandy: feveral villages are fcattered about, and fome appearance of cultivation. The bulk of the inhabitants of thefe villages are of Lithuanian origin, a poor-looking people, not differing much in vifage and drefs from the

Courlanders. A long piece of timber ſtuck in the plain, gave us notice of our entering Poliſh Pruſſia.

A conſiderable proportion of this latter kingdom bears ſtill the original names of the countries from whom they were wreſted. The kingdom of Pruſſia is made up of provinces from every adjoining kingdom. The Pruſſian, the Ruſſian, and the Auſtrian eagles have torn with their claws empires in pieces. Pruſſia has however generouſly enough left Poland in poſſeſſion of a ſtripe of land, two or three miles in breadth, reaching to the Baltic ſea. The Poles have at leaſt a ſight of that ocean, which formerly waſhed and rolled upon their ſhores!

Diſtreſſed Poland muſt depend entirely upon the mercy of her powerful plunderers. Theſe three powers affect to be her tutors; but they have robbed their wards: and I ſuſpect their contentions relate rather to the farther diviſion of the property, than to the education of the children.

We had no ſooner paſſed this wooden diviſion of empires, than a Pruſſian huſſar

trotted towards us, from a neighbouring village. He inquired what we were? whence we had come? We were three French merchants travelling to Berlin. The huſſar, judging the moſt favourably of us, ſtroked his muſtachios, and went away to give a report to his officers, who were walking upon the heath.

The ſpires of Memel appear before us. The high ſandy banks interrupt the view of Memel. The veſſels in the river ſeem buried betwixt the banks of ſand; the river itſelf not being ſeen until you are cloſe upon it. Memel is a very great commercial port: it is of no conſideration in any other reſpect. Poland gives it timber, flax, grain, and various commodities for exportation. The rafts of baulks, and lighters with other articles of trade, are daily arriving from the interior parts of Poland. Even at this early ſeaſon, there are in the river fifty ſail of Britiſh ſhips. The buzz of ſeamen, and the crowd of people joſtling each other upon the ſtreets, declare the commercial conſequence of Memel.

Memel

Memel is likewiſe at preſent crowded with troops. I obſerve a regiment in green and white uniforms. The Pruſſian uniforms are blue. This new uniform, reſembling the Ruſſian, muſt be intended for particular purpoſes.

LETTER LVIII.

The Hiſtory of Poland.

Memel, April 1792.

SINCE my laſt, I have made ſeveral excurſions in this neighbourhood. It is a fine country, equally fitted for the purſuits of agriculture and commerce. The Pruſſians appear clearly to have views of ſtill farther conqueſts on this coaſt. It is aſtoniſhing that the European powers ſhould ſit ſtill, as if they were unconcerned ſpectators of the partitioning plans of Auſtria, Pruſſia, and Ruſſia! If the Pruſſians are not checked in their career, they may extend their maritime domain from Dantzic to Lubec.

The kingdom of Poland verging towards its final diſſolution—for the authority of the crown is now rather nominal than real, and

and powers merely nominal do not long ſurvive their independence—the kingdom of Poland, at the preſent moment, naturally calls back our attention to the viciſſitudes of its hiſtory and government.

Poland in the changes it has recently undergone, and in the ſituation in which it now appears, preſents an intereſting ſubject of enquiry to the philoſopher and the politician. About a century ago, it was one of the moſt reſpectable powers in Europe. It now preſerves little more than a nominal exiſtence, as an independent nation. During the courſe of the preſent century it has exhibited an almoſt uninterrupted ſcene of diſorder and calamity. Sometimes overrun and pillaged by foreign enemies, and generally diſtracted by internal diſſenſions, peace and ſecurity and ſettled government have been almoſt unknown. Kings have been raiſed to the throne, and precipitated from it. Conſtitutions have been eſtabliſhed, and altered, and overthrown, and renewed. Some of its fineſt provinces have been diſmembered; and foreign armies

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed in the republic, either to perpetuate its miſeries, or to complete its ſubjugation.

The ſituation of the country exhibits the moſt ſtriking impreſſions of theſe convulſions. The principles of diſorder, long ago incorporated into the frame of the conſtitution, have been matured and perfected by the habits of party diſſenſion, heightened by religious animoſity, and fomented by the inſidious policy of the neighbouring ſtates. Law and juſtice have been ſilenced by the ſtrife of faction, or overwhelmed by the preſſure of foreign force. The people, reduced to the loweſt ſtate of degradation and oppreſſion, have no intereſt in the meaſures of government, and no incitement to induſtry. The practice of ſelling the crown to the higheſt bidder has introduced an almoſt univerſal venality among the nobility. Amidſt the violence of faction, honour and principle have been ſwept away; and, while almoſt every nation of Europe has been advancing in improvement and civilization, Poland appears to have been long ſtationary; if

if it has not rather returned in a contrary progreſs.

It would require both greater abilities and more leiſure than fall to my ſhare, to trace the operation of the various cauſes which have concurred to produce theſe remarkable effects. As, however, the ſubject is intereſting, and as it may tend to give you a more diſtinct idea of the ſituation of the country, I ſhall endeavour to give you a ſhort view of the principal circumſtances which have deprived the republic of Poland of its wonted energy, and reduced it to the ſtate of weakneſs in which it appears at the period of which I propoſe to give you ſome account.

The nature of the Poliſh government is certainly the great ſource from which the misfortunes of this country have taken their riſe. In ſupport of this opinion, I begin with an hiſtorical ſketch of the government of Poland, from which you will ſee the weakneſs of the ſtate keeping pace with what the Poles are pleaſed to call the freedom of the conſtitution.

The

The firſt part of the hiſtory of Poland, like that of moſt other nations, cannot be conſidered in any other light than as a maſs of fable, illuminated with ſome ſcattered rays of truth. Little, therefore, can be certainly known reſpecting the origin of the Poliſh government. There are, however, ſeveral circumſtances to direct our opinion. The deſcription Tacitus has left us of the tribes from whom the Poles are, moſt probably, deſcended; the analogy of other northern nations, and the general tenor of the Poliſh hiſtory, tend to prove, that the great body of the people enjoyed an high degree of freedom, as well as a conſiderable influence on the meaſures of government. Although the ſovereign power was generally continued in the ſame family, there was no eſtabliſhed rule of hereditary ſucceſſion. If a free election did not take place on every vacancy, the conſent of the nation, expreſſed in a general diet, was always neceſſary to confirm the nomination of a ſucceſſor to the ducal dignity. While the government remained on this footing, the people were

in fact free; and yet the ſovereign power appears to have been ſubject to no conſtitutional reſtrictions. Neither the prerogatives of the duke, nor the privileges of the people, were defined by poſitive law. Cuſtom ſeems to have formed the only reſtriction to either. The ſovereign carried his power as far as he thought he could depend upon the ſubmiſſion of the nation; and the people ſometimes exerted their right of expelling a tyrannical maſter, and aſſerting their freedom by force.

The government ſubſiſted for a conſiderable time in this undefined ſtate. We are only informed of two attempts, in the courſe of ſome centuries, to introduce a better form of government. But as the Poles were not better acquainted with the ſcience of legiſlation at that time, than their deſcendants appear to have been in later times, the expedients hit upon produced none of the benefits expected from them, and the old government was, in both caſes, ſoon reſtored.

The firſt circumſtance, which tended to operate

operate a permanent influence on the form of the government, and the condition of the people, was the practice of beftowing fiefs, upon the feudal principles. This inftitution, faid to have been introduced into Poland about the year 820, invefted the feudal lords with a fpecies of authority over their vaffals, which was, eventually, the more fatal, as in the days of ignorance it was not thought neceffary to define it with much accuracy. The effects of the inftitution were not immediately felt: and confequently we may fafely conclude, that, in a ftate of fociety in which men are but little difpofed to inveftigate diftant confequences, they were not forefeen. The inftitution was therefore allowed gradually to incorporate itfelf into the conftitution. By the continued exercife of command, the nobles proceeded by infenfible gradations to regard the peafants under their jurifdiction as their property. The difficulty of refifting an authority which, being at firft but little felt, rofe into abfolute dominion by flow acceffions and diftant encroachments,

ments, each of which, ſingly conſidered, was of little importance, by degrees broke the ſpirit of the people, and diſpoſed them to unreſerved ſubmiſſion.

I conſider the introduction of Chriſtianity as another event, which, by tending to ſtrengthen the power of the ariſtocracy, concurred to produce the changes which have ſince taken place in the government. The Poles embraced the Chriſtian religion about the year 964, when the ſpiritual tyranny of Europe was at its height; and the deſpotic principles of the Roman catholic church were received along with the Roman catholic faith. The apoſtles of this church, far from imitating the primitive ſimplicity of their predeceſſors, aſſumed in their miſſion a tone of authority ſuitable to the high claims of their temporal head. Formerly, the Romiſh church formed through Europe one vaſt body, whoſe general intereſts were the ſame, in all its members; one ſpirit pervaded and animated the whole. Preſumptuous from the powers they pretended to derive from the author of their religion, and proud

proud from the veneration in which they were held by a ſuperſtitious people, they naturally coaleſced with thoſe who aſpired to hold the reins of government. Artful and intriguing, they were indefatigable in their endeavours to extend the power of the church; and although from a colluſion of intereſts they might ſometimes find it expedient to cruſh a tyrant, yet the principle of tyranny entered too deeply into their character to allow them to oppoſe uſurpations in which they themſelves had ſo great a ſhare.

No ſooner had they eſtabliſhed themſelves in Poland, than they found themſelves placed in a ſituation highly favourable to their ambitious views. From either the piety or the folly of the kings and nobles, the higher clergy ſoon ſaw themſelves poſſeſſed of ample territories, inveſted with all the privileges of the nobility, and in ſome caſes with a more extenſive authority than any other ſubject could claim. While therefore their territorial juriſdiction gave them the ſame intereſt with the nobility to encroach on the rights of the peaſants, the blind

blind veneration attached to their character facilitated their ufurpations. The facred phalanx, well trained to fubordination, feconded with all the fervor of holy zeal the views of their leaders: and thus the domineering fpirit of the Roman catholic hierarchy, concurring with the arbitrary principles of the feudal fyftem, gave an eafy victory to the clergy and nobility over the liberties of the people. While implicit obedience was enforced by the horrors of damnation, as well as by the dread of temporal punifhment, no effectual oppofition to the tyranny of the ariftocracy could be expected.

The people firft felt the confequences of thefe inftitutions, in the extinction of their political privileges. They were excluded from the diet of election; the nobility and clergy referving to themfelves the fole right of regulating the fucceffion to the fovereignty. The abridgement of perfonal liberty quickly followed the lofs of political confequence. Oppreffions were multiplied. A variety of vexatious claims were,

were, from time to time, eſtabliſhed againſt them. They were gradually deprived of the rights of men, as well as of thoſe of citizens. The law was too weak, or too corrupt, to afford them relief; and they ſunk into a ſtate of ſervitude, from which they have never ſince emerged.

Attempts have indeed been made to reſtore them to the protection of law, and the rank of freemen; but theſe attempts have hitherto failed of ſucceſs. Towards the cloſe of the twelfth century, Caſimir the ſecond endeavoured to repreſs the tyranny of the ariſtocracy, and to ſecure the perſons and property of the peaſants: but the influence of his regulations, as it aroſe chiefly from his perſonal character, produced only a tranſitory alleviation of the grievances of the people. The oppreſſions he attempted to remedy aroſe, on the other hand, from cauſes which were permanent, and inherent in the conſtitution. Accordingly, no ſooner had the death of this amiable monarch removed the reſtraint of his authority, than the anarchy and violence of the ariſtocracy

broke

broke out with renewed fury. The pride of the moſt turbulent of the nobility was offended by this attempt to ſet bounds to their uſurpations; and this circumſtance, joined to the uncertain ideas entertained concerning the right of ſucceſſion to the ſovereignty, ſplit the nation into factions. Hence aroſe a train of civil wars, which convulſed the ſtate, with only occaſional intervals of tranquillity, till towards the middle of the fourteenth century. At this period aroſe Caſimir the Great, to whoſe abilities Poland ſtill conſiders herſelf much indebted. As the reign of this prince forms a remarkable era in the Poliſh annals, allow me to ſketch the leading features of the conſtitution, at his elevation to the throne in 1333.

There were at this period no written laws in Poland. There was no determinate order of ſucceſſion to the crown. The ſovereign, indeed, generally appointed his ſucceſſor, but this appointment was not always reſpected. The nobility always exerciſed the right of confirming their ſove-

reign's nomination, if they did not claim the privilege of a free election. When different competitors appeared, as was often the case, the right of the ſtrongeſt was generally found the moſt reaſonable. The prerogatives of the crown were not yet defined: but the king was often obliged to conſult the ſentiments of the nation, before he adopted his meaſures. Caſimir himſelf, though one of the ableſt monarchs that ever held the Poliſh ſceptre, was, on ſeveral occaſions, under the neceſſity of ſubmitting his plans to the diſcuſſion of the national diet. The palatines, or great barons, had acquired an almoſt unlimited juriſdiction in their palatinates, and the inferior gentry had loſt much of their conſequence. The peaſants were reduced to the loweſt ſtate of ſlavery and degradation; their perſons and their property being entirely at the diſpoſal of their maſters. In a word, the conſtitution was changed, from a monarchy controuled by a republican aſſembly, to a monarchy fettered by a turbulent ariſtocracy.

Caſimir

Caſimir became the legiſlator of his country, but he did not attempt to bring back the conſtitution to its original principles. Without attempting to remedy the fundamental errors of the government, he ſatiſfied himſelf with regulating the internal police of his kingdom, and correcting a maſs of abuſes, which had been accumulating for ages. He allowed the order of ſucceſſion to the crown to remain in the ſame unſettled ſtate in which he found it: and he made no attempt to fix the diſtinctive limits between the regal and ariſtocratical branches of the conſtitution; each continuing to retain thoſe vague and inconſiſtent pretenſions which can exiſt together only in a ſtate of ſociety in which the principles of government are but little ſtudied, and leſs underſtood. But he endeavoured, by a variety of regulations, to repreſs the licentious and tyrannical ſpirit of the higher nobility, which had already been the ſource of ſo much miſchief. He introduced order and form into the different departments of government: he aboliſhed many abſurd

practices, which custom had sanctioned, in the courts of justice; and in their room he established a fair and rational mode of decision. But, what particularly marks the superiority of his genius, and the justness of his political views, is the liberal protection which his laws afforded to the inferior orders of the people. He restored the peasants to the protection of the laws, abolished personal slavery, and prohibited under severe penalties the cruel exactions to which the nobles had subjected all who had had the misfortune to be born on their estates. His humane attention to the interests of this unhappy class of men led the nobility to distinguish him, with a misplaced ridicule, by the title of *king of the peasants.* Yet this is precisely the point of view in which his legislative abilities appear in their highest lustre. By raising the mass of the people to the rank of freemen, and affording them the protection of equal laws, he gave them an interest in the welfare of the state. Had the prudent and benevolent spirit of his laws been adhered to, Poland must

must have still continued a great and flourishing nation. The government, in whatever hands lodged, would have been always able to command the services of an active peasantry, brave from the conscious feeling of independence, and attached to their country by the strongest of all ties, that of common interest.

But after the death of Casimir, the peasants were quickly thrown back into that state of misery and degradation from which he had attempted to raise them. The laws enacted in their favour were soon either abrogated or forgotten. The situation of this class of men became even more deplorable and hopeless from the attempt that had been made to relieve them. Their masters seem to have taken the hint from this circumstance, to secure their future usurpations with all the solemnity of legal enactment. Pains and penalties without number were, accordingly, denounced against all of them who should dare to think themselves entitled to the common rights of human nature; and their lives and properties

were again ſubjected to the caprices of every gentleman who choſe to indemnify their maſters, or pay a trivial fine as the compenſation for their murder.

In conſequence of this ſyſtem of oppreſſion, equally inhuman and abſurd, the ſtate has in a great meaſure deprived herſelf of the ſervices of the only claſs of men capable of ſupporting her honour, and defending her frontier. The peaſants, ſunk and imbruted by long habits of the moſt abject ſlavery, have loſt that elaſtic vigour, both of mind and body, which is neceſſary to conſtitute a ſoldier. They have hardly the ſhadow of intereſt in the public welfare. Having nothing but bare exiſtence to loſe, they have nothing but mere animal life to defend: and being already as low as it is poſſible to reduce them, they may, when forced to change maſters, be placed in a better ſituation, but cannot be reduced to a worſe. Hence the defence of the ſtate has been left entirely to the nobility; a claſs of men whom habits of licentious independence have rendered totally unfit for ſubmitting

to the neceſſary ſtrictneſs of military ſubordination. Thus the national ſtrength has, of late, become chiefly formidable to the nation itſelf. As an evidence of what I advance, allow me to remind you of the wonderful facility with which Charles the twelfth over-ran Poland, and of the ſtill more ſurpriſing eaſe with which a few Ruſſian regiments overawed this once mighty nation at the election of the preſent king. In theſe and all ſimilar caſes, the peaſants ſtood neuter; and the nobility, purſuing each his ſeparate meaſures, left the whole an eaſy prey.

It would have been happy for the nobility, had they contented themſelves with being the patrons and protectors of a free peaſantry. They would not have had the mortification of ſeeing their country become an appendage of a neighbouring ſtate, and themſelves the neceſſary tools of foreign intrigues. But inſtead of being actuated by that generous ambition which ſtrives to equal thoſe of higher fame, they have generally been guided by a mean and tyrannical pride, which is gratified only by degrading

degrading and trampling on thoſe who are below: and, as this principle is commonly found in connection with raſhneſs and folly, they have, as might have been expected, exceeded their intention, and cruſhed themſelves under the weight of their miſtaken grandeur.

Excuſe the ſeverity of this cenſure; if you do not think with me, that the circumſtances warrant it.

Adieu. You ſhall hear from me again ſoon.

Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

Memel, April 1792.

DEAR SIR,

IN my laſt letter I gave you a view of the Poliſh government, from the period at which perſonal freedom and ſome ſhow of political importance were enjoyed by the nation at large, to the final extinction of the liberty of the peaſants, conſequent on the death of Caſimir the Great. The changes which have ſince been made in the conſtitution, aſſumed a new direction. The nobles, being now the indiſputed maſters of the lives and fortunes of their peaſants, next turned their attention to retrench the power of the crown.

The royal prerogative was indeed exorbitant, and totally incompatible with the principles of a free government. It accorded however with the irregular ſpirit of feudal times, when the nobility, although

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poffeffing no conftitutional check on the power of the crown, could yet overcome the king; and extort from his fears the enjoyment of an independence which was not fecured to them by any legal conceffion. But the time was now arrived when this precarious freedom could no longer fatisfy an high-fpirited nobility. The nobles determined to hold their privileges, not as matter of favour, but as matter of right: they determined to limit the power of their kings, and to eftablifh their own immunities on folid conftitutional grounds.

I go on to trace the moft remarkable changes which this principle has introduced into the conftitution. Perhaps on this fubject I fhall not be able to give you much information which you may not already have met with. But I flatter myfelf you will not reckon my letters wholly ufelefs, if they only afford you (which is all I aim at) a concentrated view of circumftances, in themfelves highly important, and rendered more peculiarly interefting by the confequences which have refulted from them.

The

The reformation which Casimir the Great made in the government, appears to have suggested to the nobility the idea of abridging the power of the crown. The laws of this prince had been calculated to restrain the licentious freedom of the aristocracy, and to emancipate the peasants from the galling yoke which their masters had imposed on them. This principle, once admitted, might lay a foundation for much more important alterations. An union of interests between the king and the people might enable the king to reduce the independent baron to the humble level of a subject, and exalt the slave to a participation of the privileges of his master. Another circumstance concurred to confirm their fears. Casimir's successor was a foreigner. He possessed extensive hereditary dominions; and might employ his Hungarian army to crush the liberties of the Polish subjects.

The nobles resolved to prevent these dangers, and the occasion was highly favourable to their design. Lewis was in Hungary when his uncle breathed his last.

The

The nobles, profiting of his abſence, reſolved to ſtipulate with him for their own privileges, before they would admit him into the kingdom. Accordingly, a deputation of their number waited on him at Buda, and demanded of him a formal renunciation of ſome branches of the prerogative, as the conditions on which they offered to become his ſubjects. The moſt important of theſe terms were, that the king ſhould not impoſe taxes without the conſent of the ſtates; that in the event of his dying without heirs male, the election of his ſucceſſor ſhould be left to the ſtates; and that he ſhould reimburſe to the nation the expences, and even the damages, occaſioned by his wars. Theſe terms were highly reaſonable; Lewis accepted them; and they were from henceforth regarded as fundamental articles of the conſtitution. This is the origin of that contract, termed in Poliſh Latin *Pacta Conventa*, which, with occaſional variations agreeable to the circumſtances of the times, every ſubſequent king has been obliged to ratify previous to his coronation.

The

The idea of a limited monarchy was not yet familiar in Europe; and, it is probable, the nobles were not more fully resolved to watch over their new privileges, than the king was to disregard his concessions. The point was soon brought to issue. Lewis imposed, by his sole authority, the ordinary land-tax. The nobles remonstrated; and as the king found it necessary to have money at any rate, he consented to reduce the tax considerably, and to purchase the quiet enjoyment of the remainder by consenting, that those who were appointed to fill the principal offices of government should hold their places for life, and by promising to exclude all foreigners from his administration.

You will observe, that the attempts of the nobles were hitherto directed rather to restrain the activity of the royal prerogative, than to divide the powers of government with the king. The legislature was still wholly attached to the crown, though clogged and retarded in its operations by the weight of those restrictions which the aristocracy had imposed. Had Lewis joined the abilities of his predecessor to his own arbitrary

arbitrary principles, it is probable, the nobles would have derived little benefit from their new privileges. The command of taxation, although now the leading power which communicates motion to the whole machine of government, was of very subordinate importance at the period of which I write, when taxable commodities were few; when the revenues of the crown, like those of every feudal baron, were chiefly derived from the royal demesnes; when armies were raised and supported on feudal principles, and the salaries of the officers of state arose from the lands and emoluments unalienably attached to their offices.

But the measures of this prince were generally impolitic. Incapable of those enlarged views which take in the causes, connections and consequences of political arrangements, he opposed to the systematic encroachments of the aristocracy mere temporary expedients; and, as he neither knew how to resist with dignity, nor to concede with a good grace, his resistance did not procure him the character of firm-

nefs, nor his conceffion the reputation of moderation. Yet, notwithftanding the weaknefs of his adminiftration, and the jealoufy with which the ariftocracy watched over his meafures, he was able to difmember feveral provinces at that time dependent on Poland, and to procure the confent of a diet to elect his fon-in-law, Sigifmond marquis of Brandenburg, his fucceffor. On the former of thefe acts were founded the pretenfions of Auftria, at the partition of Poland in 1772: and, confidering the hereditary rapacity of the houfe of Brandenburg, it may be reckoned an uncommon inftance of moderation in the Pruffian monarch, that, at the fame difaftrous period, he did not claim the crown of Poland in confequence of the latter.

Fortunately, however, for the Poles, Lewis died before Sigifmond reached Poland. The nobles, agreeably to the terms of their original compact with Lewis, affumed the right of election. Sigifmond's pretenfions were fet afide; and the daughter of the late king was placed on the throne,

 on

on condition that she should not marry without the approbation of the states—an article which still continues to be inserted in the *Pacta Conventa.* The marriage of this princess with Ladislaus Jaghello, in 1388, added Lithuania, Samogitia, and Russia Nigra to the dominions of Poland, and introduced a new line of kings.

No other conditions but those stipulated with Lewis were imposed upon Ladislaus at his elevation to the throne. But in the course of his reign the nobles pushed their claims farther than they had hitherto done; and the character of the king was favourable to their views. Ladislaus possessed great talents both as a general and a statesman, joined to the less royal virtues of an honest man. Superior himself to injustice and all the oblique arts of political intrigue, he seems not to have suspected them in others, and consequently to have given too much scope to the growing pretensions of the aristocracy. As, by the conditions on which he had obtained the crown, he could not impose taxes without the consent of the states,

ſtates, he aſſembled the nobles in their different provinces for the purpoſe of obtaining an additional ſubſidy. This was the firſt inſtance of the exerciſe of the right of taxation by the nobility. It was alſo the origin of the dietines, or provincial aſſemblies.

Having now ſucceeded in appropriating to themſelves the right of impoſing taxes, the nobles began to form farther pretenſions. An occaſion ſoon offered of bringing their claims forward. Ladiſlaus wiſhed to ſecure the ſucceſſion to his ſon. The nobles were willing to gratify their monarch in this favourite point, provided he would conſent to grant them ſome new immunities. The firmneſs of the king withſtood their importunity. A tumult, as is uſual on thoſe occaſions, enſued; but Ladiſlaus was not to be overawed by their clamours. His generoſity, however, ſoon afterwards granted to the wiſhes of his people what his firmneſs had refuſed to their demands.

Several of thoſe new regulations, which regarded the qualifications requiſite to the holding of offices in the ſtate, had the me-

rit of utility to recommend them. A defire to conciliate the affections of his people, with the view of continuing the fucceffion in his family, feems to be the only principle on which we can account for his agreeing to deprive the crown of the right of coining money without the confent of the ftates; and for his granting to the nobility an exemption from arreft, till after legal conviction of the crime with which they were charged—a privilege which fruftrates the ends of juftice, and renders the nobles, in a great meafure, independent of the laws of their country.

In making thefe conceffions, Ladiflaus certainly departed from the ordinary principle of his adminiftration. His general conduct was founded on higher notions of the prerogatives of kings. Permit me, for the honour of royalty, to mention a fingle inftance.

A powerful party in Bohemia, difgufted with their own king, made a tender of their crown to the Polifh monarch. "You "are not your king's judges," replied Ladiflaus;

diflaus; "he is accountable only to God. "A ftate can never be happy, unlefs the "legiflative power be undivided: and, by "attempting to feize upon rights which "do not belong to you, you would intro-"duce a confufion into your government, "infinitely more fatal than the evils you pre-"tend to remedy. I am, therefore, lefs "fenfibly affected by this mark of your ef-"teem, than offended at your prefumption, "in propofing that I fhould commit an act "of injuftice fo contrary to my character."

In one refpect, the partitioning powers themfelves might, probably, agree in opinion with the Polifh monarch: but we fhall not, perhaps, find many kings who would not have reflected on the immediate *advantages* of fuch an offer, before they had refufed it on the principle of its *injuftice.*

The fufpicious jealoufy with which the ariftocracy watched over its new privileges, had almoft difappointed the fon of Ladiflaus of the fucceffion, notwithftanding the meafures his father had taken to fecure it. Ladiflaus the fixth was a minor at the death of

his father, and consequently incapable of ratifying the *Pacta Conventa.* By the address of his party, however, this difficulty was surmounted; the principal men among his friends having sworn to the observance of the *Pacta Conventa* in his name, and engaged that he would ratify this contract when he came of age. Such were the precautions which the jealous spirit of liberty required. He was crowned with the usual solemnities in 1435.

The reign of this young monarch, which was neither long nor fortunate, is distinguished by no material change in the constitution. The nobles contented themselves with consolidating their strength, and confirming by exercise the powers they had already obtained, without preferring any new claim. But in the succeeding reign they made ample amends for this moderation. Ladislaus the sixth, just as he attained the age of manhood, fell at Varna, fighting in violation of the faith of treaties; and was succeeded by his brother Casimir the fourth, already Great Duke of Lithuania.

 The

The long and unquiet reign of this prince, who governed Poland for near half a century, furnifhed the nobles with various pretences to increafe their power. Cafimir's injudicious partiality for his Lithuanian fubjects difgufted the Poles. The long wars in which he was engaged, exhaufted the treafury. And although, during the courfe of his reign, the boundaries of the ftate were extended; and its federative ftrength increafed, by the union of the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia in the perfon of his eldeft fon; yet thefe circumftances feemed rather to imprefs the nobles with a dread of his power, than with an efteem for his talents. Indeed, although his military fuccefs was confiderable, and his good fortune ftill more remarkable, he poffeffed neither that energy of mind which commands refpect, nor that condefcenfion which wins affection. Although he had fucceeded in uniting t[illegible] fovereignty of rival ftates in his own family, Poland felt her internal ftrength debilitated and her refources exhaufted by the fplendour of her

monarch. Accordingly the nobles eagerly ſeized every occaſion which the king's neceſſities afforded them of farther abridging his power, and eſtabliſhing to themſelves a more general and immediate influence on all the meaſures of government.

The moſt important change in the conſtitution which this reign introduced, was that by which the right of taxation was veſted excluſively in the general diet. In conſequence of this regulation it became neceſſary to give this aſſembly a new and a more convenient form. Previouſly to this period, all who were comprehended in the claſs of nobles, together with a certain number of the inhabitants of the cities, poſſeſſed the right of voting in the general diet. Hence thoſe meetings generally bore a nearer reſemblance to the tumultuouſneſs of a mob, than to the ſolemnity of a great national aſſembly. Too numerous to be comprehended within the limits of any regular forms of procedure, and too much broken by party diſtinctions to be capable of rational diſcuſſion, they could only give, or refuſe,

refuse, a general sanction to the objects that were laid before them: they were totally inadequate to the detail of public business, and the accuracy of investigation which must enter into the proceedings of a legislative assembly.

To remedy these radical defects, the constitution of this body was changed: and to prevent the confusion inseparable from universal suffrage, the nobles agreed to wave this right, and to vote by representation. The provincial diets, which from the reign of Ladislaus Jaghello had possessed the right of taxation, each in its own province, were from henceforth deprived of this right, and confined to the election of deputies, or nuncios as they are called, to represent the body of electors in the general diet. The great officers of state, the palatines, the castellans, the bishops, and senators retained their places in the diet, as being attached to their respective dignities.

The general diet, thus constituted, has preserved its form to the present times. One material alteration only deserves to be mentioned.

tioned. The free towns have been deprived of their right to ſend nuncios to this aſſembly. It is unqueſtionable that at the time when the general diet was eſtabliſhed in its preſent form, and during the reigns of all the Jaghello family, the free towns poſſeſſed the right of repreſentation. The firſt attempt to procure their excluſion was made in the reign of Sigiſmond the firſt. But the nobles were at that time unſucceſsful. As ſoon, however, as all ideas of hereditary right to the throne were not only in fact given up, but formally renounced and proſcribed by ſtatute, there was no longer any power to check their uſurpations. The whole authority of the ſtate was at every vacancy actually lodged in their hands, and one of the firſt uſes they made of it was to ſtrip the towns of their right of repreſentation in the general diet.

The general diet, conſtituted on theſe principles, proved highly favourable to the deſigns of the ariſtocracy. By condenſing and concentrating their power, it enabled them to act with unanimity and concert. Formerly

merly their meaſures were formed on *the ſpur of the occaſion*, and purſued at intervals, as the preſſure of regal authority produced a general feeling of diſſatisfaction, or the aſcendency of ſome bold ſpirit rouſed the latent deſire of liberty diſperſed over the extent of a large empire. For almoſt all the Poliſh nobles live on their eſtates. They had no rallying point, round which they might aſſemble when the cry of endangered liberty ſummoned them to the defence of their privileges. The alarm was not eaſily propagated; the public voice was collected with difficulty; and it was ſtill more difficult to combine the ſtrength of the order, and direct it towards a ſingle object. Even the provincial diets wanted weight to enforce their remonſtrances. The King could eaſily overawe each of them ſeparately, and triumph by ſucceſſive efforts over a reſiſtance which was only invincible when it was univerſal.

The general diet collected the ſcattered rays of reſiſtance into a focus. It formed a conſtitutional body, neither too unwieldy to be

be actuated by one ſpirit, nor too feeble to want the energy neceſſary to enforce its authority. It was a theatre on which the ambitious might diſplay his talents, the diſcontented might traverſe the public meaſures in revenge of his private wrongs, and the patriot might make the voice of truth be heard and reſpected by the nation.

Accordingly the inſtitution of the general diet ſoon gave a new direction to the views of the ariſtocracy. Previouſly to this æra, the nobles aimed rather at an exemption from grievances than at the poſſeſſion of power. The oppoſition lay rather between the *exertion* of prerogative and the *enjoyment* of independence, than between the actual power of the ſovereign and the claimed power of the nobles. Even the negative which the ariſtocracy enjoyed againſt the king's right of taxation, was rather an expedient to ſave the purſes of the ſubject, than an attempt to appropriate to themſelves one of the branches of the king's prerogative. But from this period the crown and the diet were directly oppoſed to one another.

Each

Each aimed at a direct afcendency in the legiflature; and neither could gain, except in as far as its antagonift loft.

That branch of the legiflature which was firft vefted in this affembly was becoming gradually more important. As the progrefs of fociety advanced, the expences of government increafed, while the hereditary revenues of the crown remained ftationary. The fucceffive improvements in arts and manufactures were gradually enhancing the price of every article of elegance and luxury. Commerce had begun to introduce the valuable productions of foreign artifts, which could not be purchafed but at a much higher price than the rude materials of former elegance. Wars were becoming more tedious and obftinate; and although carried on with lefs ferocity and bloodfhed, they were gradually requiring a much greater command of money. The combination of thefe circumftances with others of a fimilar tendency foon rendered the right of taxation the moft important branch of legiflature. I need not remind you of the ufe which the

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commons of England have made of this right. In the hands of the Polish diet it soon became an equally powerful engine. From the difference of situation and character between the two nations, it has indeed in England led to the most perfect model of a free government which has yet been framed; while in Poland it has conducted to a state of weakness, anarchy, and oppression, which has perhaps never been exceeded in the annals of government. But its effects have been equally powerful in both cases.

Casimir soon felt the weight of that power with which he had invested the general diet. His continual necessities obliged him to have frequent recourse to this assembly for supplies, and every new demand produced a new list of grievances. The diet immediately learnt to connect the question of redress with the demand of supply. The king and the aristocracy endeavoured each to make the best bargain they could for their respective interests: and the dispute was generally carried on with all the wind-

ing

ing arts and cool deceit which none but underling traders and politicians would condescend to practise.

The greatest part of the grievances complained of during the reign of this monarch regarded the infraction of the existing laws, and therefore deserve not to be noticed here. But the diets gradually pushed their claims beyond the limits of the privileges they had already acquired. They made bold inroads upon the prerogative, and seized the most valuable rights of the crown. The most important concession which they obtained from this monarch, was that by which he obliged himself not to enact laws without the consent of the diet.

Hitherto the legislative power had resided entirely in the king. All the laws were promulgated by his sole authority. Casimir the Great had indeed convoked a general diet in 1347, for the purpose of sanctioning the code of laws he wished to establish. But this was a singular instance. The change which that monarch proposed to introduce was very general. By consulting previously

ly the ſentiments of the nation, he wiſhed to procure a more cordial aſſent to an highly beneficial ſyſtem of regulations.—His conduct, in this inſtance, marked the benevolence of his character and the mildneſs of his adminiſtration; but it implied no renunciation of his prerogative. In the occaſional changes, which from this period had been made in the laws, the king had always acted by his ſole authority. The conſent of the ſtates was never ſuppoſed neceſſary to give authority to the emanations of the king's legiſlative power.—The reign of Caſimir IV. is the æra at which the diet eſtabliſhed a conſtitutional right to check the exerciſe of the prerogative of majeſty.

The neceſſities of this prince obliged him alſo to reſign another very important right of the crown—namely, the right of ſummoning the feudal barons to attend his ſtandard at the head of their retainers, whenever he was engaged in hoſtilities with any of his enemies. The nobility, haraſſed by his frequent wars, and greatly diminiſhed

ed in their number, wiſhed to ſecure themſelves againſt the deſtructive effects of the ambition of their kings. Nothing could be more likely to accompliſh this end, than throwing off their obligations to obey the royal ſummons. Caſimir wiſhed to repleniſh his exhauſted treaſury; and money was to be procured in no other way than by yielding to the claims of the diet. Accordingly the bargain, being thus mutually advantageous, was ſoon concluded, and the feudal ſervices aboliſhed.

Such were the principal changes made upon the government of Poland from the death of Caſimir the Great in 1370, to the death of Caſimir IV. in 1492. You will probably agree with me, that the ariſtocracy had hitherto proceeded with conſiderable moderation; and that the reſtraints they had impoſed on the power of the crown were, upon the whole, reaſonable. To impoſe legal checks upon the exerciſe of thoſe prerogatives which never can be ſafely left to the will of a ſovereign was a glorious attempt. But, while I allow the higheſt praiſe to the principle on which the Poles

 proceeded,

proceeded, it muſt at the ſame time be admitted, that they have not been judicious in the means by which they have applied it. It would be difficult to point out any period at which the Poliſh conſtitution was ſo regulated as to have even the appearance of ſtability. In all the ſucceſſive improvements which they have made on the form of their government, the Poles have either exceeded their intention, or have fallen ſhort of it: they either have not ſufficiently ſecured their liberty, or they have thrown off all reſtraint and ſubordination.

We may reckon the eſtabliſhment of general diets in their preſent form to be the æra of the conſtitution. Before this period, every thing was in a ſtate of incoherence and uncertainty. The general diet was intended to be a regular counterpoiſe to the power of the crown, and to introduce order and conſiſtency into the government. But it by no means produced the effects expected from it. The government was ſtill as irregularly balanced as before. The king who, by œconomy, could confine the expences of his government within the hereditary

revenue

revenue of his crown was under no neceſſity of ſummoning the diet; and, conſequently, there was no legal remedy for whatever grievances might exiſt during his reign. On the other hand, the elective nature of the crown threw the whole power of the ſtate at every vacancy into the hands of the ariſtocracy, who might, under the pretence of ſecuring their privileges, impoſe whatever limitations they pleaſed on the ſucceſſor, or even annihilate the ſovereign power.

Although, however, the king might ſometimes acquire a decided preponderancy in the conſtitution, it is obvious that, in the ſtruggle between royalty and ariſtocracy, he had to ſuſtain a very unequal conteſt. There was no hereditary body of men, who, from a ſimilarity of intereſts, were induced to ſupport the dignity of the crown. He was obliged to chooſe his ſervants out of that order whoſe views were directly contrary to his own. In advancing ſuch men to offices of truſt and importance, he often only inveſted them with a greater power of injuring his cauſe: for royal favour is not always

repaid by gratitude. You will obferve, al-fo, that, by the peculiarity of the Polifh con-ftitution, the great officers of the crown have an intereft directly contrary to that of their mafter. Inftead of deriving ftrength and fupport from the power of the crown, they derive the ftrength and fplendour of their offices from the diminution of that power. They are appointed for life, and are by confequence independent of the king. Their weight in the government in-creafes as the royal authority diminifhes; and as political gratitude is not generally a very active virtue, we may reafonably pre-fume that, if they do not really join in hum-bling their mafter, they will at leaft not be very ftrenuous in their endeavours to pre-vent his depreffion.

Had it been poffible for the Poles to pre-vent all farther innovation, and fix their conftitution on the principles on which it refted at the death of Cafimir IV. the crown would have retained fufficient energy for the purpofes of regular government, and the ariftocracy would have poffeffed a fuf-ficient

ficient check upon the royal prerogatives. But the conſtitution was not formed for ſtability. The king was a ſolitary friendleſs power; and the ariſtocracy was turbulent and aſpiring. Of conſequence the principle of change was continually operating, and no expedient could be found to counteract its effect, until the power of the crown was reduced almoſt to nothing, and the nobles left wholly without controul. Adieu.

LETTER LX.

Memel, April 1792.

DEAR SIR,

THE administraſtion of Batori had impreſſed the nobles with a ſenſe of the neceſſity of order and regularity in the government. The ſpirit of diſcord was for a time laid; public virtue began to raiſe her head; and the good of the ſtate appeared to be the only object of the national exertions. The diet which met at the commencement of the interregnum conducted its deliberations with unanimity; and enacted ſeveral ſalutary laws tending to check that ſpirit of faction and intrigue which had on former elections convulſed the ſtate; to prevent corruption in the electors, by declaring bribery a capital crime; and thus, by removing every motive of private intereſt in the electors, to procure a fair unbiaſſed declaration of the national will. The

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moſt flattering hopes were conceived from this auſpicious commencement.

But it ſoon appeared that the principles of diſorder were too deeply rooted, to be ſo eaſily removed. The laws for preventing bribery and faction were entered on the records of the diet, and quietly laid up in the archives of the aſſembly, to ſleep in ſilence. The feeble effort of patriotiſm, which the diet of convocation had made, appeared to have exhauſted the public ſpirit of the nation. It was an exertion to which the Poles had not been accuſtomed; and they reſolved to make themſelves ample amends, in the ſequel of the interregnum, for the reſtraints they had come under at its commencement. Accordingly various factions immediately ſtarted up, whoſe intrigues were carried on with the utmoſt keenneſs and exaſperation. The diet of election at laſt met; and the irritable temper of the electors, inflamed by reciprocal abuſe and animoſity, ſoon hurried them beyond their uſual meaſure of outrage. From mutual inſult they proceeded to open violence;

and, in the ſhock of the contending parties, the booths of the ſenators were burnt to the ground, and many lives loſt on both ſides. Such were the effects of Poliſh liberty!

You will naturally ſuppoſe that factions, whoſe animoſity had given birth to ſuch atrocious deeds, could not eaſily be brought to concur in any one meaſure. There remained only one expedient for obtaining an unanimous election, ſuch as the laws of Poland require; namely, the extirpation of one or other of the leading parties. But, as they were pretty equally balanced, fear prevented both from coming to this extremity; and they contented themſelves with electing each the candidate to whoſe intereſt they were attached. Accordingly Maximilian of Auſtria, and Sigiſmond ſon of the king of Sweden by a daughter of Sigiſmond the firſt, were both choſen. A civil war enſued, in which Maximilian, being twice defeated and at laſt taken priſoner, was forced to purchaſe his freedom with the renunciation of his claims.

The long reign of Sigiſmond the third,

although it was fruitful in difaftrous events, produced no material change on the confti- tution. The fortunes of the ftate were, for many years, fuftained by the courage of his foldiers, and the fingular merit of his generals. It required all the ill-judged po- licy of Sigifmond the third to fruftrate the advantages which thefe produced to the ftate. But this prince was as obftinate in his poli- tical errors, as bigoted in his religious opi- nions. Educated in a blind veneration for the church of Rome, his catholic zeal loft him the crown of Sweden. His dila- tory and feeble meafures loft to his fon the crown of Ruffia, after he had been folemnly elected at Mufcow. His hopelefs claims on Sweden engaged him in a ruinous war with the celebrated Guftavus Adolphus; which an obftinate adherence to the opinion of his priefts and confeffors led him to protract, long after every profpect of fuccefs had va- nifhed. The peevifh averfion which he fhewed to the doctrines of the reformation excited the fufpicion of thofe who adhered to them. The lofs of Moldavia, Walachia,
and

and Livonia alienated the minds of thofe who preferred the honour of their country to the favour of their king. And fome attempts to promote the intereft of his own family in the ftate, alarmed the jealoufy of thofe who wifhed to deprefs the royal influence. The nobles complained of his facrificing the interefts of the nation to promote his perfonal views, and to gratify his own refentment. Confederacies were formed for the redrefs of grievances. A general feeling of difcontent pervaded the nation. Thefe difcontents however were not immediately productive of any important confequences. They only ferved to weaken a government naturally inefficient; and to throw odium on a king who was an object of contempt, rather than of hatred. Sigifmond died in 1632, after a reign of forty-five years. Had he lived in peaceful times, and been placed at the head of a more regular government, he might have been claffed among the multitude of fovereigns, whom we pardon for not doing any good, in confideration of their not doing any

harm.

harm. But, both from character and education, he was peculiarly unfit for the times in which he lived, and the kingdom he governed.

The only acceffion which the ariftocracy made to their privileges, in the courfe of his reign, was a law fecuring exclufively to the nobility the landed property of the kingdom; and prohibiting the king or the commons from purchafing fiefs without the confent of the diet.

The diet of election was, as ufual, a fcene of tumult and diforder, although no other candidate but the fon of the late king appeared. Ladiflaus was at laft elected, and his reign was calamitous chiefly from the effects of his father's injudicious meafures. A plan had been laid to impofe the tyrannical principles of the Polifh ariftocracy on the Coffacs of the Ukraine: and the attempt to execute it loft that brave people to Poland, and had well nigh proved fatal to the ftate.

Allow me to fketch the outlines of this revolution:

revolution: it will give you an idea of the principles of the Poliſh nobles.

Stephen Batori had attached the Coſſacs to Poland, by conferring on them a large tract of country in the Ukraine, introducing military diſcipline among them, and giving them various privileges. Equally generous and brave, this people had ſince continued faithful to their benefactors, and done Poland ſignal ſervices in the deſultory invaſions of the Turks and Tartars. But the freedom which the Coſſacs enjoyed had tempted many of the Poliſh peaſants to take refuge amongſt them from the tyranny of their maſters. Various endeavours had been made to reclaim theſe fugitives; but the Coſſacs refuſed to give up, to the vengeance of their maſters, thoſe perſons who had put themſelves under their protection.

In conſequence of this refuſal, it was reſolved to take them by force; and alſo to remove the cauſe of future deſertion by impoſing on the Coſſacs themſelves the ſame ſyſtem of ſlavery which was eſtabliſhed over the Poliſh peaſants. The Coſſacs reſiſted,

fifted, but were at firft worfted, and obliged to deliver up their leaders, as hoftages for their future behaviour: the Poles, at the fame time, engaging to withdraw their armies, and leave the Coffacs in the enjoyment of their liberties.

Having got poffeffion of the leaders of the infurrection, the Poles put them to death; in contempt of the treaty, and of the royal pardon which had been previoufly granted them: and inftead of withdrawing their army, they augmented it, and laid fiege to the principal ftation of the Coffacs.

The Coffacs, thus bafely betrayed and infulted, again flew to arms; defeated their oppofers in a variety of fkirmifhes, and baffled all their attempts. Still, however, they protefted, that they had no other defign than to fecure their privileges; and offered, on the conditions ftipulated in the laft treaty, to lay down their arms, and return to their allegiance. The Poles granted what they were in no condition to refufe: but no fooner had the Coffacs difbanded their forces, than the republic again broke her faith;

and ſent additional forces to overawe the country, and pave the way for the final extinction of the liberty of the Coſſacs.

An act of violence, by no means ſingular in the annals of Poland, drove the Coſſacs to deſpair, and obliged them entirely to throw off their allegiance. In conſequence of a diſpute between Jalinſki governor of the Poliſh fortreſs of Tzerin, and Xmielniſki one of the Coſſac chiefs; the Pole carried off the Coſſac's wife, violated her, and, becauſe ſhe had made reſiſtance, put her to death. Not ſatisfied even with a revenge ſo atrocious, he next proceeded to burn Xmielniſki's houſe, in which his infant ſon periſhed.

Fired with his injuries, the Coſſac flew about among his countrymen, and excited them to take ſignal vengeance on their oppreſſors. The ſentiment of indignation was communicated with rapidity; a general revolt took place; and Xmielniſki was appointed to the ſupreme command. He had the addreſs to engage the neighbouring Tartars in his cauſe; and the combined army

my burſt into Poland with irreſiſtible violence; cut to pieces the troops ſent to oppoſe them; and deſolated the country with the fury of barbarians rendered frantic by perſonal injury. Fortunately however for Poland, the Coſſacs and Tartars at laſt differed about the diviſion of their booty; and this difference obliged them to retire into their own country, and ſaved the ſtate from deſtruction. I leave you to make your own reflections on this hiſtorical *trait*, and return to my ſubject.

While the ariſtocracy, in attempting to annihilate the liberties of the Coſſacs, expoſed the ſtate to a danger which it required the utmoſt efforts to reſiſt, they proceeded to weaken ſtill more the activity of government, and embarraſs its operations by decreeing, That the king ſhould not levy troops, nor declare war, nor conclude peace, nor ſend ambaſſadors, nor enter into alliances, without the concurrence of the diet.

Theſe abridgements of prerogative proceeded evidently from the diſcontents excited by the injudicious meaſures of the late

king.

king. Ladiſlaus had done nothing to forfeit the confidence of his ſubjects. His reign had hitherto been proſperous. He had re-annexed to the ſtate ſeveral important places, which the weakneſs of his father had loſt. His internal government was mild and equitable. He reſpected the privileges of the people, and endeavoured to promote their happineſs. But his power was inadequate to the exigencies of the ſtate. With one hand the ariſtocracy ſeized the few branches of prerogative which former diets had ſpared; with the other they attempted to cruſh the Coſſacs. Ladiſlaus was forced to look on a tame ſpectator in the one caſe; in the other he was hurried away by the torrent of national prejudice, into meaſures which no neceſſity could juſtify, nor any reaſon of ſtate excuſe.

Ladiſlaus attempted to terminate the religious diſputes which had gone abroad in his kingdom, by amicable means. He held the balance between the different ſects with as equal a hand as the fervour of the times would

would admit. He preferved to each that equality of privilege which the *Pacta Conventa* required. But the fpirit of religious animofity had gone forth, and the power of the crown was too impotent to reftrain it. Under the monkifh adminiftration of the late king, the catholics had made vaft acquifitions. It was the uniform fyftem of Sigifmond, and the only point on which his policy was uniform, to exalt this party. He employed and trufted none but catholics: and he depreffed the other fects by every fpecies of mortification and difcouragement which his power, directed by the ingenuity of the Jefuits, could throw in their way. In confequence of thefe meafures, the catholic party had acquired a decided fuperiority. Popery was confidered as the ftate religion: the term *diffidents*, now applied only to thofe who were not of this religion, had come to involve the idea of *diffenters from the national faith*; and, notwithftanding the laudable efforts of Ladiflaus to preferve the equality of rights and privileges which the laws of the ftate had

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eſtabliſhed, it was becoming more and more obvious that the catholics would finally triumph over all their antagoniſts.

Ladiſlaus died in 1648, and his paternal brother, John Caſimir, was elected to the throne. John Caſimir had embraced the eccleſiaſtical profeſſion, and was at this time a cardinal. His education among the Jeſuits, of which ſociety he had formerly been a member, gave great uneaſineſs to the proteſtants of his kingdom. They had felt on former occaſions the pernicious conſequences which had ariſen from the influence of this body on the adminiſtration, and they dreaded their aſcendant over a king, who, from education and habits, ſeemed peculiarly ſuſceptible of whatever impreſſions they might chooſe to give him. Caſimir, however, diſappointed their fears. He did not love the proteſtants, but he protected them from motives of policy. The peace of Oliva, concluded during his reign, guarantied to them all their ancient rights.

The commencement of this prince's reign gives us a favourable idea of his character.

No

No ſooner was he ſeated on his throne, than the nobles ſolicited him to take vengeance on the Coſſacs. "If we had been juſt towards the Coſſacs," replied Caſimir, "we "ſhould not now have had occaſion to pu"niſh their ravages: we have ſanctioned "their exceſſes by ſetting them the exam"ple."—But the nobles were now too powerful to be controuled by juſtice, or John Caſimir. Without regard to his opinion they raiſed forces to carry on the war, and the king was ſoon forced to yield to meaſures which he could not prevent. Such was the licentiouſneſs of the ariſtocracy, and the weakneſs of the crown!

Indeed Poland never exhibited an appearance of greater weakneſs and diſtraction than during the reign of John Caſimir. The crown now retained no other authority than what aroſe from the perſonal character of the king: and John had neither the art to gain the affections of his people, nor the energy of character to command their eſteem. Hence the government, naturally incoherent, was almoſt diſ-

ſolved. Caſimir was at one time driven out of his kingdom by foreign enemies; and through the whole of his reign forced to contend with a factious nobility. Compelled, at laſt, to take up arms againſt his own ſubjects, he was ſoon worſted; obliged to diſmiſs his troops; haraſſed with endleſs complaints; and ſtunned with the clamorous recital of imaginary grievances; till, tired of holding a mutilated ſovereignty—the ſhadow rather than the ſubſtance of royalty—he reſigned in diſguſt the crown which a trial of twenty years had convinced him was ſo irkſome to the wearer; and retired into France, where he died, about four years after.

The diſaſtrous reign of John Caſimir became ſtill more fatal by the introduction of the *Liberum Veto*, or right which every provincial deputy enjoys of putting a ſtop, by his ſingle negative, to the proceedings of the general diet—a privilege which has contributed more than any other of the Poliſh conſtitutions to the unlimited ſway of miſrule and licentiouſneſs.

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On confidering the nature of the government previous to the eftablifhment of this abfurd regulation, it is difficult to conceive how it came to be admitted, and what purpofe it could be intended to ferve. The principles of the conftitution were already abundantly incoherent. As the nobles were fubject to no reftraints but what they chofe to impofe on themfelves, there was already fufficient fcope for the licenfe of the moft turbulent fpirits. An higher degree of independence than what they had already enjoyed was impoffible. One would fuppofe therefore that, while the Poles chofe to continue even that loofe fort of union which fprings from living in the fame country, they muft wifh to maintain fome degree of unity in the government, and fome degree of order in the ftate; and, confequently, that they would not have admitted a principle fubverfive of all order and fubordination— a principle which tends to imprefs the jarring elements of their conftitution with a repulfive force, whofe intenfity increafes as the preffure of critical emergencies renders

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union neceſſary. Yet ſuch was the temper of the Poliſh nobles, that this wild privilege was no ſooner claimed than it was admitted as an eſſential branch of the conſtitution. A more ſtriking inſtance of national licentiouſneſs, or, which would be a more charitable ſuppoſition, of the inſanity of the diet which admitted it, has never been exhibited!

You will naturally ſuppoſe that there muſt have exiſted ſome very cogent reaſon to urge the diet to ſo dangerous an expedient. Far from it. The privileges of the ariſtocracy were in no danger, and conſequently there was no occaſion for any ſtate-remedy; much leſs for ſo abſurd an application. The *Liberum Veto* was not even the effect of any premeditated ſcheme. It was introduced caſually without any adequate reaſon, and without proper inveſtigation of its probable conſequences. A deputy roſe up, declared that he ſtopped the proceedings of the diet, and retired. A ſudden impulſe of reſentment appears to have hurried him to make this ridiculous

proteſt.

proteſt. The unuſual ſtyle of it raiſed a ferment in the diet. Inſtead of conſidering the deputy as a fool, and diſregarding him; the members proceeded to diſcuſs the effect which ſuch a proteſt ought to have. They proceeded to conſider whether an obſcure deputy from Upita had a right to introduce into the conſtitution a principle which had never before been thought of;—whether a ſingle wrong-headed Lithuanian had a right to give law to the general diet of Poland, and by his ſole authority to throw the government into inevitable and endleſs confuſion: and theſe queſtions they determined in the affirmative, by finding that the proteſt of deputy Sicinſki had actually diſſolved the diet. Such was the principle of Poliſh liberty and equality in the reign of John Caſimir!

The *Liberum Veto* appears the more unaccountable when you conſider it as originating in the repreſentative branch of the conſtitution. The nuncios had no ſhare in the government, except as members of the general diet. Holding no offices of reſponſibility, they

could never, as a body, have ſtate-crimes to be ſcreened from juſtice.—Having no truſt which they could abuſe, they never could find an intereſt in the public confuſion. On the contrary, it was their intereſt to eſtabliſh a regular mode of conducting public buſineſs; to give to the diet that weight which was neceſſary to enforce its deciſions; that dignity which is eſſential to a ſupreme legiſlative aſſembly, calculated to reſtrain alike the tyranny of the ſovereign and the corruption of his ſervants; and to prevent it from being diſſolved until the neceſſary buſineſs of the ſtate ſhould be concluded. This was obviouſly the intereſt of the nuncios: and as it was the only means by which they could permanently eſtabliſh their influence in the government, and diſappoint the attempts of all who might endeavour to encroach on their privileges, by the introduction of the *Veto* they in effect annihilated their own importance in the conſtitution; as they thus put it in the power of every man who choſe to be at the expence of corrupting one of their number,

ber, to render the general diet an uſeleſs excreſcence, which, though it ſtill continued to be attached to the government, could neither accelerate nor retard its motions.

When all queſtions were decided in the diet by plurality of voices, the nuncios neceſſarily poſſeſſed conſiderable weight in the government. The crown-ſervants felt that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to evade the authority of the diet, when ſo many of its members were intereſted in bringing to light and puniſhing every abuſe of their power. They were therefore led to conſult the public good in the exerciſe of their offices, in order to eſcape the animadverſion of the general diet. But when the eſtabliſhment of the *Liberum Veto* enabled them to buy the negative of a deputy, this check on their conduct was removed. Inſtead of making themſelves agreeable to the nation, they had now nothing more to do but to make themſelves rich, and they were ſure of impunity. Thus the exerciſe of power was left without controul, and pub-

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lic virtue deprived of one of its ſtrongeſt ſupports. For, I imagine that, in moſt minds, public virtue is not a little ſtrengthened by motives of private intereſt. The nuncios might indeed ſtill complain of the violation of their privileges, and the iniquity of the executive government. But the hiſtory of Poland affords complete evidence that the exigencies of the public were never ſo great but that a nuncio might be found to ſell his negative; nor the deliberations of the diet ſo regular but that a pretence might be found for interpoſing it.

A meaſure therefore ſo directly oppoſed, not only to the general intereſts of the ſtate, but alſo to the particular views of that branch of the legiſlature from which it originated, and in favour of which it is eſtabliſhed, has never in any other inſtance been conceived. In the poſſibility of occurrences it may indeed happen that the exerciſe of this power may be beneficial. But when you conſider the tendency of ſuch an inſtitution, and the purpoſes to which it has generally been applied, you will probably think that the con-

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duct of the nuncios in this inftance bears no fmall affinity to that of thofe fagacious gentlemen who revenge an affront by cutting their own throat inftead of that of their adverfary.

It is probable that Sicinfki expected to be bribed to withdraw his proteft. This has generally been the view with which the *Veto* has fince been interpofed. But the circumftances of the times prevented this mode of compromifing the matter. The nobles had been irritated by the king's unwillingnefs to profecute the Coffac war. They were farther offended with the terms of the truce which had been granted them. There was therefore a general tendency in the nation to thwart the king's meafures. The treafury was exhaufted, and confiderable arrears were due to the army. The appearances in Ruffia and Sweden at the fame time made it neceffary to provide againft the ftorm which was ready to burft upon the republic from thefe quarters. There was, therefore, a neceffity for feveral additional taxes; and, as thefe could be impofed

only

posed only by the diet, every measure that tended to frustrate the decisions of this assembly was favoured by all who wished to save, for the present, the imposition of new burdens. All who possessed any branch of the executive power, or who held any place or office under government, were accountable only to the diet. The king could neither restrain, nor punish, nor displace them. They naturally, therefore, favoured an expedient which tended to set them above the controul of the only tribunal that could take cognizance of their conduct. The nobles who were accused of capital crimes could be tried by the diet only: and at this period some of the greatest men in the state were suspected of having excited the Cossac invasion; and others were charged with different crimes. These and their adherents favoured of course an expedient which saved them from the ignominy of public justice. Besides all these descriptions of men, who were led by particular interest to support the *Liberum Veto*; there was at this period, and always has been, a nume-

rous party in Poland, who, having no hopes of profit or preferment in the ordinary courſe of regular government, and being reſtrained by no tie of honour or principle, have uniformly fomented faction and diſorder, that they might have a chance of promoting their private intereſt in the midſt of national confuſion. The union of all theſe parties proved too powerful and too clamorous for the friends of order and good government; the *Liberum Veto* was declared an eſſential branch of the Poliſh conſtitution, and the diet ſeparated in great confuſion.

The eſtabliſhment of the *Liberum Veto* completed the Poliſh conſtitution. For a period of about three centuries, the ariſtocracy had been keeping up, by gradual and painful efforts, a ſtructure compoſed of rude and ſhapeleſs parts, which they had not the ſkill to adjuſt to one another. The *Liberum Veto* now crowned the pile; and the whole together forms the moſt ſingular aſſemblage of incoherent materials that ever was exhibited.

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In contemplating this motley maſs we obſerve the outlines of a free conſtitution terminating, by a ſtrange capriciouſneſs of deſign, in ſlavery, and many parts of a noble and regular government, which however produced only miſrule and licentiouſneſs. It has ſomehow happened that the Poles have never been able to hit the due medium between regal tyranny and popular confuſion, which conſtitutes a free government; and from which every deviation is, on the one hand dangerous to liberty, and on the other inconſiſtent with ſubordination and national union. Even thoſe parts of the conſtitution which deſerve the higheſt praiſe are found connected with circumſtances which fruſtrate their end.

I might illuſtrate this in every branch of the conſtitution; but, leſt I ſhould tire your patience, I ſhall confine my obſervations to a few leading points.

The end for which the firſt limitations were impoſed upon the crown was, to ſecure the perſons and the property of the ſubject. This was a noble object, had it been

been purfued upon liberal principles. But the idea of general liberty never entered the minds of the Polifh reformers. It was their uniform fyftem to unite the extremes of freedom and defpotifm; to render the diftance between nobles and plebeians almoft infinite; and, while they fecured to the former a perfect freedom from controul, to preclude the latter from every approximation either to political privileges or perfonal fecurity. A reformation conducted on fuch principles deferves no praife, fince it could be productive of no public benefit.

You may, perhaps, imagine that the reafon for placing fo many branches of the executive government in the hands of the crown-fervants, was, to render thofe who enjoyed them accountable to the nation for the mode in which they exercifed them. But thefe conftitutions were founded on no fuch liberal principles. On the contrary, their object was, to render the great officers of ftate independent and unaccountable. And this object was completely accomplifhed. For, by vefting thefe branches of the

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government for life, thoſe who poſſeſſed them were independent of the crown; and afterwards, by means of the *Liberum Veto*, they were enabled to render themſelves independent of the general diet. The great officers of ſtate were thus rendered ſo many deſpots, who had every temptation which impunity could give to abuſe their power. From this circumſtance many inconveniencies aroſe. It was ſeldom that the great officers of ſtate could all be brought to concur in the ſame views. On the contrary, they were generally divided by hereditary hatred, which nothing could allay; and, as there exiſted no power to reſtrain the whole, it frequently happened that the meaſures which each purſued were calculated for the ſole purpoſe of counteracting thoſe of his adverſaries. Nor did they always wait the ſlow iſſue of intrigue in their competitions. They not unfrequently raiſed armies, fought pitched battles, beſieged one another's houſes, and deſolated one another's eſtates, with all the fury of incenſed ſavages. The king, in the mean time, could hardly fail to offend

ſend one or other of the parties; if he did not offend both. Hence he raiſed up many enemies to traverſe his adminiſtration. Nor was this always the worſt conſequence. The nation at large was commonly diſpoſed to extend the reſentment excited by the miſdeeds of his ſervants to the king who had appointed them. Hence he loſt the public confidence; and in a government like that of Poland the loſs of public confidence is neceſſarily followed by the diſſolution of public order.

The practice of placing the principal offices of government in the hands of a few great barons independent of the king, has contributed perhaps as much as the *Liberum Veto* itſelf to introduce irremediable weakneſs and confuſion into the public councils.

The eſtabliſhment of the general diet, and veſting it with the ſupreme legiſlative power, was a meaſure of great national importance. But the advantages which ſhould have ariſen from it were fruſtrated by ſeveral adventitious circumſtances. The election of the nuncios muſt be unanimous;

and as all the nobility have votes in their ſeveral provinces, it is in the power of any one refractory nobleman to exclude his province from its ſhare in the national repreſentation. Inſtead of being ſurpriſed that this mode of election ſhould now and then prevent the choice of a deputy, we may rather wonder that it does not ſometimes prevent the choice of them all. It reflects honour on the temper of the Poles, that ſuch effects have not followed ſo abſurd a regulation.

The time allowed for the ſitting of this aſſembly is much too ſhort. The laws only provide that the general diet ſhall be aſſembled once in two years; and the ſitting of each diet is by poſitive ſtatute limited to ſix weeks. This is by no means adequate to the buſineſs which muſt come before the ſupreme legiſlative aſſembly of a great nation. This regulation was intended to promote the diſpatch of buſineſs, and to ſave the members from the expence of a long reſidence at the place where the meetings were held. But ſuch conſiderations are too childiſh

childifh to be named in comparifon of the pernicious effects which muft often arife from hurrying over the public bufinefs. Great part even of the fhort fpace allotted for the fitting of the diet is confumed in going through the ordinary forms of the affembly, and in fquabbling about the election of a marfhal: fo that very little bufinefs can be tranfacted in the courfe of any one diet; and that little muft be done in a fuperficial, flovenly manner.

The powers of the general diet appear to be too extenfive for a mixed government. This affembly, befides poffeffing the fupreme legiflative and judicial authority, declares war, and concludes peace, levies troops, and fends ambaffadors, and enters into alliances. The vefting of thefe branches of executive government in the diet neceffarily produces a great degree of languor and debility in the national exertions. When you confider that the diet muft be fummoned at leaft fix weeks before the time of meeting, and make a reafonable allowance for the ordinary delays

occaſioned by the intrigues of party, and the difficulty of reconciling every member to any one ſet of meaſures, you will probably think that it would be no eaſy matter to contrive a ſyſtem of government leſs fitted for activity and vigour.

The hiſtory of Poland affords many calamitous inſtances of the weakneſs occaſioned by lodging ſo many branches of the executive government in the general diet. The ſtate has ſometimes been brought to the brink of ruin, before the king was empowered to take the neceſſary ſteps for its defence. In a country ſurrounded by powerful and warlike neighbours ſome portion of liberty ſhould perhaps be riſked, to give the executive government a proper degree of ſtrength and activity. A nation which depends for its ſafety on the forbearance of its neighbours may indeed be free; but its freedom is a freedom little to be envied. To give to a people the real enjoyment of liberty, it muſt be ſecured to them from without as well as from within. The Poles appear to have apprehended only the latter danger; they

they have taken infinite pains to ſecure themſelves againſt their own ſovereigns, long after the power of the crown had ceaſed to be formidable; and they have allowed the ſtrength of government to languiſh and decay in the midſt of dangers which called for more than ordinary exertion. In this reſpect their conduct has certainly been injudicious; ſince, by leaving the executive government much more under the direction of the crown, they might have preſerved unimpaired their national ſtrength, without endangering their privileges. For it ſeems inconceivable, that a king hedged in on every ſide by preciſe reſtrictions, watched by the vigilant eye of a nobility jealous of their independence, and unſupported by the ſentiment of reſpect attached to hereditary ſovereignty, ſhould be able to ſubvert the conſtitution, even although his power were much more extenſive than that of a king of Poland.

Laſtly, although the conſtitution of the general diet were perfect in every other reſpect, the power which every provincial

deputy enjoys of diſſolving the aſſembly whenever he thinks proper, would fruſtrate every advantage which could be expected from it. In truth, from the eſtabliſhment of this abſurd privilege, the general diet has almoſt always come to an untimely end. The nation has of conſequence remained without laws, and almoſt without government; and Poland has exhibited the appearance ſo happily deſcribed in the Bible, when "*there was no king in Iſrael, and* "*every man did that which was right in his* "*own eyes.*"

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LETTER LXI.

DEAR SIR, Memel, April 1792.

HAD the Poliſh nobles underſtood their own intereſt, or that of their country, they would have been cautious of weakening the energy of their government by farther limitations of the royal prerogative than thoſe that exiſted at the death of Caſimir IV. —they would have endeavoured to perfect that form of government which was already ſketched out. With this end in view, their meaſures might have been directed to enſure a regular ſucceſſion of general diets, by obliging the king to ſummon them at ſtated periods; to give to thoſe aſſemblies a more direct ſhare in the legiſlature by beſtowing on them the privilege of propoſing laws, as well as that of rejecting thoſe propoſed by the crown; and, above all, to give to the

king the power of reſtraining the encroachments of the diet, as well as to the diet the power of checking the uſurpations of the king.

But it ſeems inſeparable from liberty to puſh its claims beyond a juſt and reaſonable degree of freedom. No ſooner have men ceaſed to be ſlaves than they aſpire to be maſters. Political liberty and political power, like adjoining colours in the priſmatic ſcale, are ſo blended at their point of union, that you muſt make conſiderable advances on either ſide before the diſtinction become perfectly apparent. Hence the tranſition from liberty to power is eaſy and natural; and power, once attained, always increaſes its activity, in proportion as it makes new acceſſions. Hence it has happened that in our own country *the privileges of the people* has generally been only a popular phraſe for the *power of their leaders.* The ſame thing has happened in Poland; and perhaps it always will happen in all human ſocieties. To ſecure the liberty of the ſubjects againſt the tyranny of the crown

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has been the pretence of the ſucceſſive changes which have taken place in the conſtitution of Poland; but the real deſign has been to throw the whole power of the ſtate into the hands of the ariſtocracy.

The condition of the peaſants forms the beſt commentary on the conduct of the nobles. While theſe men were covering their uſurpations with the name of liberty, they left the peaſants to languiſh in the moſt miſerable and hopeleſs ſlavery: while with one hand theſe men ſeized ſucceſſively almoſt every branch of the king's prerogative, with the other they bound harder the fetters of the people: while they raiſed themſelves above the control of law, they ſunk the people below its protection. If we attend to theſe facts, Sir, we ſhall not be inclined to give much praiſe to that liberty of which the Poles boaſt; nor to allow great credit to the patriotiſm of its aſſertors.

It is indeed true, that the powers of which the crown was already deprived, were, upon the whole, thoſe which no man

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who deferves to be free will ever wifh to fee vefted in the crown. But it is by no means fo certain that they were more fafely lodged in the crown-fervants, and in the general diet, on the principles on which they received them. An Englifhman will, I am perfuaded, be of opinion, that, unlefs freedom of the nation at large keep pace with the reftrictions impofed on the fovereign, the people will only exchange one mafter for a multitude; and, as the minute ramifications of power thus divided come into a more immediate contact with every order of men in the ftate, he will probably think that they are likely to become vexatious and oppreffive, according as the diminution of their fize multiplies their number. Excufe for the prefent the difapprobation with which I fpeak of Polifh liberty, and Polifh patriotifm. When you have feen their effect, I fhall not need to make any farther apology.

The reign of John Albert, one of the younger fons of Cafimir IV. who was elected on the death of his father, to the exclufion

exclusion of his elder brothers, produced no alteration in the constitution. Let me give the generosity of the aristocracy in sparing the weakness of this prince its due praise. It is a praise I shall not often have occasion to repeat.

I need not inform you, that the diet of election, which met on the demise of John Albert, was a scene of faction, intrigue, animosity, and corruption. You may always take it for granted, that a Polish election is the triumph of selfish views and party violence over public spirit and rational decision. The two oldest sons of Casimir IV. were again excluded, and the national choice fell upon Alexander, another of his sons, whose character and connections were supposed more suitable to the interests of the state.

This prince loved and encouraged the polite arts. But the liberality with which he rewarded men of genius accorded ill with the parsimonious temper of the aristocracy, which represented it as excessive, and tending to impoverish the state. In consequence

quence of theſe apprehenſions, a law was paſſed which prohibited the king form diſpoſing of the public revenue without the conſent of the diet. The only other alteration of importance which took place during the courſe of this reign, was that by which the king was deprived of the power of altering the forms of procedure in the courts of juſtice. Theſe regulations were reaſonable and ſalutary; as, without weakening the neceſſary energy of government, they only ſecured the perſons and property of the ſubject againſt the peculation and the tyranny of their governors.

The death of Alexander, in 1507, opened the ſucceſſion to his elder brother Sigiſmond, who had twice before been diſappointed of it. The abilities of this monarch ſuſtained, during the courſe of a long and glorious reign, the tottering power of the crown. His vigilance reſtrained the licentiouſneſs of the ariſtocracy: the rectitude of his meaſures removed the ordinary pretexts for innovation; and the general proſperity of the country, ariſing chiefly from

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the ſuperior talents of the king, and the excellence of his adminiſtration, procured him the love and veneration of his ſubjects.

It has been generally ſaid, that the mildneſs of his government was favourable to this increaſing power of the nobles. But the opinion ſeems founded on a partial view of his ſituation. Men who ſaw the power of the nobles conſtantly increaſing, and regretted the confuſion likely to reſult from their exorbitant pretenſions, have blamed Sigiſmond for not performing impoſſibilities. In fact, the ariſtocracy was already uncontrollable. They had become ſenſible of their power, and only waited for an occaſion to ſeize the whole authority of the ſtate. It reflects no inconſiderable honour on the abilities of Sigiſmond, that his adminiſtration afforded them no pretence for any great innovation. Petty grievances were indeed, as uſual, complained of, on the demand of the new ſubſidies; and Sigiſmond never denied to the wiſhes of his people what he thought they were entitled to demand, or what he found himſelf in no

condition

condition to refuſe. He reſpected the privileges of his ſubjects from the rectitude of his principles; he yielded in ſome caſe to their prejudices from political diſcernment. He was too enlightened not to ſe the folly of irritating a body of men whon he could not ſubdue; and of exciting unreaſonable demands, by refuſing claims of no material conſequence. He knew the impetuous character of his nobles, and he ſtudied to acquire their confidence, that he might be enabled to promote the proſperity of his country.

Accordingly, his reign is one of the moſt fortunate periods of the Poliſh annals: and, although he was not able permanently to fix the limits of the conſtitution, nor effectually to check its tendency towards confuſion, he at leaſt retarded its progreſs. He tranſmitted to his ſon the crown, which he had worn with diſtinguiſhed honour for upwards of forty years, unimpaired in its luſtre. He was able even to give to the conſtitution a contrary direction to that in which it had formerly been impelled, by procuring,

procuring, towards the cloſe of his reign, his ſon to be elected his ſucceſſor. This was the laſt effort which was made to increaſe the influence of the crown, and its effects were only tranſitory.

From the reign of Caſimir the Great it had been a favourite object with the nobles to render the crown wholly elective. Several attempts had been made, if not to eſtabliſh an order of ſucceſſion, at leaſt to prevent the confuſion of an interregnum, by appointing the ſucceſſor to the crown during the life of the reigning king. Lewis had procured Sigiſmond of Brandenburg to be elected his ſucceſſor; but the diet afterwards ſet aſide his election. Ladiſlaus Jaghello alſo obtained a partial conſent to the nomination of his ſon to the ſucceſſion: but although the diet afterwards elected him, they ſhowed ſufficiently, by their conduct, that the previous form of nomination had no influence on their deciſion. But Sigiſmond Auguſtus ſucceeded to the throne on the demiſe of his father,

with the ſame facility as if he had held his title by hereditary right.

The nobles ſoon repented of their complaiſance for their favourite monarch.—Some ſteps of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, at the commencement of his reign, particularly his having married without the conſent of the diet, excited diſcontents among the ariſtocracy. The diet inſiſted that the king ſhould repudiate his wife; the king refuſed to comply with their demand; and the aſſembly was diſſolved with very bad impreſſions of their new monarch. This diſcontent appears to have given occaſion to one of the moſt fatal of the Poliſh laws; as, a few years afterwards, Sigiſmond was compelled to agree that the reigning king ſhould not in any meaſure interfere in the appointment of his ſucceſſor, and that the unlimited right of election ſhould be veſted in the nobles.

The death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus without iſſue gave complete efficacy to this regulation. He died in 1572; and in him the male branch of the houſe of Jaghello became extinct.

This family had governed Poland near two centuries; and, although hiſtory affords few examples of a race of princes who better deſerved the confidence and eſteem of their ſubjects, it was their fate to ſee the prerogatives of the crown gradually mouldering away, till at laſt little elſe than the name of royalty was left them. Beſet with a turbulent and ambitious nobility, whoſe encroachments it required a perpetual effort to reſiſt, they found their influence in the government imperceptibly diminiſhed, and the ſtrength of the crown waſted, till, at the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, the conſtitution aſſumed a new form; and, from being a monarchy limited and controlled by a popular aſſembly, became a republic, or more properly an ariſtocracy, with a firſt magiſtrate elected for life.

The abilities of the Jaghello family had rendered Poland flouriſhing at home, and reſpected abroad. But this appearance of things was ſoon to be changed. Poland was henceforth doomed to experience all the miſeries conſequent on popular elections,

where there is neither law nor authority to reftrain the electors. She was deftined to fee her internal economy thrown into irreparable confufion, by the interference of all the nations of Europe in her domeftic affairs, without either public fpirit or national vigour to fupport her independence; and to feel the imbecility refulting from the difperfion of the powers of government among a multitude of independent nobles, whofe views could feldom be united, and directed to a fingle object; becaufe there exifted no power to confolidate the difcordant mafs, and prevent the exceffes of party diffenfions.

While the crown was fupported by hereditary influence, there was, on every election, fome candidate to whom the majority of the nation was attached from a refpect for the reigning family; there was no pretence for the interference of foreigners, as no foreign ftate could hope to give a king to a nation which, though it elected its fovereign, confined its choice to fome individual of the family of its ancient kings.

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In these circumstances, the squabbles of the different factions, though often conducted with great violence, were terminated with the greater facility, as they were not fomented and exasperated by foreign influence and foreign gold. In these circumstances too, the crown necessarily retained considerable authority. Its real power had indeed been long on the decline, and the aristocracy had acquired a decided preponderancy. But still it required a degree of union among the nobles which in Poland was not always easily obtained, to ascertain their superiority.

But all restraint from hereditary influence was now at an end. The nobles were masters of the state, uncontrolled, and unaccountable. And, as there was no candidate whose claims were supported by the respect which naturally follows hereditary dominion, each individual consulted his particular interest, and endeavoured to make the best bargain he could for himself. The same circumstances gave occasion to the interference of foreign powers in the ap-

proaching election. The ſovereignty of Poland was a ſplendid object of ambition: the electors were venal; and the wealth of foreign candidates flowed in liberal ſtreams. Under the pretence of finding a prince who might ſupport by his alliance the power of the ſtate, each party, and almoſt each individual too, ſupported the intereſt of the candidate by whom they were paid, until they received a higher price from ſome of his competitors.

Thus, by their practice of ſetting up their crown to the higheſt bidder, and courting the interference of foreign nations in their domeſtic affairs, the Poles have been ſelling their independence as a nation for the courſe of two centuries. It muſt be aſcribed to the jealous care with which the nations of Europe have long profeſſed to maintain the equilibrium of their political balance, and to the difficulty of dividing the ſpoils of an extenſive kingdom, that, under ſuch a vicious form of government, the Poles have ſo long continued to maintain a ſeparate exiſtence as a nation. A

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cynical obſerver might be excuſed for aſſerting, that, if they have not already been entirely ſubjected to a foreign yoke, they at leaſt have deſerved it.

Let me however do them juſtice. A party in the ſtate blended reſpect for the family of their late kings with a concern for their own particular profit; and while, like their fellow-electors, they attached themſelves to a candidate who could ſatiſfy their avarice, they reſolved to ſtipulate with him that he ſhould marry the princeſs Anne, ſiſter of their late monarch.

But while each party ſupported a different candidate, according as inclination, or intereſt, or principle dictated, there was one point in which they all agreed. They all determined not to give themſelves a maſter who might let them feel his power. To provide againſt this danger, the *Pacta Conventa*, the origin of which I formerly mentioned, were drawn up in a more regular form, and containing a more numerous catalogue of ſtipulations, than uſual. This deed comprehended the whole

of the privileges and powers which the nobles had obtained from their kings, from the reign of Lewis to the prefent time, together with fome new articles which were added for farther fecurity. In order to obtain at all times an opportunity of prefenting their grievances, and watching over the conduct of adminiftration, it was provided that the general diet, the holding of which had hitherto depended on the will of the king, fhould be convened at leaft once every two years. With the fame view, it was refolved that fixteen refident fenators fhould be named, who fhould always be ready to affift the king with their advice, in the intervals between the diets. But this inftitution was not carried into effect during the few months that Henry reigned in Poland. In order that every nobleman might have his claim of fharing the profits arifing from the *fale of the crown*, it was ftipulated that every gentleman in the kingdom fhould have a vote in the diet of election. And in order to imprefs the king with a proper fenfe of both the duty and dependence of his fituation, it was

was enacted, that his infraction of this original compact ſhould involve the releaſe of his ſubjects from all their allegiance, and cancel his right to the throne. This deed the king was to ratify previouſly to his coronation; and all the clauſes contained in it were to be regarded, in all time coming, as fundamental articles of the conſtitution.

The framing of theſe ſtipulations was the firſt act of legiſlation exerciſed by the nobility. Formerly the nobles had only a negative on the legiſlative prerogative of the crown. On the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus, the legiſlative power naturally devolved to them, not by any expreſs law, but becauſe they choſe to aſſume it; and becauſe there was no authority in the ſtate to diſpute their claim.

In one reſpect, the diet exerciſed their newly acquired right of legiſlation with ſingular judgment and moderation.

The doctrines of the reformation had already made great progreſs in Poland.—The two Sigiſmonds, although they appear to have entertained no thoughts of ſeparat-

ing from the communion of the church of Rome, were however moderate enough to allow their ſubjects to judge for themſelves in religious matters. Whether this moderation proceeded from their having formed juſt notions of the effects of religious toleration, or from their inability to check the tendency of their ſubjects towards the reformed dogmas, I ſhall not determine; but it is certain that they employed indifferently men of either ſect. And the conſequence of this indirect management of the new doctrines was, that at the death of Sigiſmond Auguſtus the collective body of thoſe who diſſented from the Roman catholic communion, including alſo thoſe who adhered to the Greek church, of which the number was conſiderable, comprehended much the moſt numerous, as well as the moſt powerful party in the ſtate.

The ſituation of Europe at this period naturally impreſſed this party with anxiety. Religious fanaticiſm had lately armed the inhabitants of ſome of the neighbouring countries againſt one another, with more

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than ſavage fury; and had given birth to deeds of uncommon atrocity and violence. The principle of diſcord was yet unſubdued, though its activity had ſuffered a temporary relaxation. The ſtate of Europe indicated the inaction of general debility, rather than the tranquillity of ſettled peace. It was uncertain how ſoon the unextinguiſhed ſparks of diſſenſion might again burſt forth: it was uncertain in what direction the flame might be impelled, and whom it might conſume. In theſe circumſtances, it was equally the intereſt of all parties to guard againſt a danger which muſt inevitably be deſtructive to all, whichever party ſhould finally prevail.

To cut off, therefore, all pretence for religious animoſity, an article was inſerted in the *Pacta Conventa*, declaring the perfect equality of all the different religious ſects in point of rights and privileges; baniſhing the idea of a dominant religion, and declaring it treaſonable to attempt exciting any diſturbances in the ſtate on account of religious differences. The king was to engage ſolemnly

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to keep peace among the *diffidents* in religion—a name applied not to one, but equally to all parties, and intended to mark ſimply the difference of religious opinions, excluding the idea of conformity or non-conformity to a national ſtandard—and to maintain inviolably the equality of privileges among the different ſects.

This moderation reflects the higheſt honour on the diet, when it is contraſted with that phrenſy of fanaticiſm which at this period too generally diſgraced the Chriſtian name, and impelled almoſt every other nation of Europe to decide their religious controverſies by the ſanguinary logic of maſſacre and extirpation. It is indeed true, that the nature of the Poliſh government, by giving too ample ſcope to faction and miſrule, has enabled the Roman catholic party completely to fruſtrate the good effects of thoſe ſalutary regulations: but it ſhould be remembered to the honour of Poland, that it was the firſt Chriſtian nation whoſe religious differences were conducted with temper, and adjuſted on the liberal princi-

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ple of general toleration, and participation of privilege.

The Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III. of France, was the firſt who received the crown after it was thus abridged of its prerogatives, and rendered wholly elective. Beſides purchaſing his election by private donations to a great amount; and by the ratification of the *Pacta Conventa*, he was obliged to promiſe ſeveral other advantages to Poland. The payment of an annual ſubſidy; the ſupport of a body of cadets; the ſending of a fleet into the Baltic to co-operate with the Poliſh armies; and the liquidation of the debts contracted by the late king, were inſiſted on, and agreed to. The article by which the king obliged himſelf to marry the princeſs Anne was, for the preſent, delayed. The perſonal charms of the lady muſt indeed have been for ſome time on the decline, as ſhe was now approaching to her grand climacteric; on which account we need not wonder that a young king, though a Frenchman, ſhould not diſcover any ſingular eagerneſs for the nuptial bliſs.

Henry

Henry had been only a few months in Poland, when the death of Charles IX. opened to him the fucceffion to the crown of France. Apprehending that the Poles might obftruct his departure, he quitted the kingdom privately. The nobles confidered his flight as an infult on the ftate, and declared the throne vacant; thus eftablifhing by precedent, as they had already done by law, their right to depofe a fovereign whom they confidered unworthy to reign.

The interregnum was, as ufual, a fcene of violence and confufion, of which a double election was the confequence; the emperor Maximilian and Stephen Batori being each proclaimed by their refpective parties. The death of Maximilian very foon after his election left Batori without a competitor, and faved Poland from a civil war. This danger being removed, the diet proceeded to carry into effect the law which ordained the appointment of fixteen refident fenators to affift the king with their advice, or rather to control him in the exercife of the

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few prerogatives which the courtefy of the ariftocracy permitted him to enjoy.

The next ftep of the diet was to deprive the king of the right of judging in the laft refort. He had formerly been divefted of the right of altering the eftablifhed forms of proceeding in the courts of juftice; but thefe courts had hitherto continued to derive their authority from him; they were accountable to him; and their decifions liable to be reviewed by him. It was now enacted that each province fhould, in its provincial affemblies, elect its own judges, whofe decifion fhould be final; and that in all capital cafes the nobles fhould be fubject only to the jurifdiction of the general diet.

The privileges of a Polifh noble were now of high importance. He was his own legiflator, and his own judge: he could make kings, and he could ftrip them of their diadem; and, although he muft ftill be indebted to the fovereign he had given himfelf, for whatever office he held in the government; yet, when he had

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once got poſſeſſion, he held it during life, in contempt of every earthly power.—Such ſplendid attributes were too valuable to be communicated at the pleaſure of a king. The crown was therefore deprived of this power; and the ſacred privileges of nobility were ſecured from the profane touch of the vulgar, by a law which enacted, That no commoner ſhould be ennobled without the conſent of the diet.

You may perhaps aſk, In what could the power of a king of Poland now conſiſt? It depended chiefly on the opinion of his ſubjects, on the ſentiment of reſpect for majeſty which had deſcended from former times, and on the habits formed by a once unlimited obedience; which, though they were gradually wearing off, ſtill gave to the nation at large a tendency to ſubordination, when no circumſtances intervened to counteract their effect. A ſovereign who was reſpected and beloved might influence the national councils by the exerciſe of his virtues, or the attachment to his perſon. He might thus revive the ancient habits of obedience, and

conduct

conduct his administration with tolerable smoothness and facility.

But wretched was the situation of that king who once lost the confidence of his nobles. If his abilities secured him from their contempt, he was sure to be persecuted by their hatred. He was irretrievably doomed to have his measures thwarted by factions which he could neither oppose with success nor yield to with honour, to have his best intentions misrepresented, his favours repaid by ingratitude, and to maintain a hopeless struggle against misrule and licentiousness, which he was unable to restrain, and durst not punish.

Batori was fortunate enough to obtain the confidence of the nobility; and consequently the inefficiency of the government was but little felt during the course of his reign. The respect inspired by his talents and integrity enabled him to unite the discordant principles of the constitution, and direct the combined force of the state; and as his measures were generally calculated to promote the real interests of his kingdom, rather

ther than to procure to himſelf any celebrity, his adminiſtration was highly beneficial to Poland. He died in 1586, leaving behind him the well-merited reputation of a prince whoſe abilities deſerved the eſteem of his ſubjects, while his virtues merited their love.

LETTER LXII.

STEPHEN BATORI was fucceeded on the Polifh throne, in 1586, by Sigifmond the fon of John king of Sweden, to whom alfo he fucceeded on the throne of Sweden. Sigifmond, a weak and bigoted prince, devoted himfelf almoft wholly to matters of religion. He gained many converts, deftroyed many proteftant churches, erected many convents, founded many feminaries; but he was deprived of the kingdom of Sweden; loft to Poland the provinces of Livonia, Moldavia, and Wallachia; and laid the foundation of a dreadful rebellion of the Coffacs, which broke out in the reign of his fucceffor, and deluged Poland for near half a century.

The name of *diffidents* had hitherto comprehended the Roman catholics as well as other fects: but the former having increafed greatly in number and influence, confidered themfelves as the national church,

 and

and applied the term *diffidents* exclufively to the Greeks and Proteftants. Still however thefe fects maintained their right of eligibility to the rights of the executive as well as the legiflative power almoft undifputed. And, in all the diets, a perfect coequality of all the different fects was recognized as a fundamental law of the kingdom.

Uladiflaus, who fucceeded his father Sigifmond in 1632, did not adopt the fentiments, or follow the plan, of his predeceffor. He endeavoured to reconcile the different fects, but all his attempts were in vain. He was more fuccefsful in his wars with foreign powers. He repreffed the attacks of the Ruffians and Turks; and forced the Swedes to reftore all the dominions ravifhed from Poland in the conteft between his father and Guftavus Adolphus. The death of Uladiflaus was followed by a tumultuous interregnum, the calamities of which were heightened by the incurfions and ravages of the Coffacs, ftirred up to rebellion by encroachments made in the reign of Uladiflaus upon their privileges.

John Caſimir, brother of Uladiſlaus, and the laſt prince of the female branch of the houſe of Jaghello, was choſen king in 1649. In his reign, in 1654, Smolenſko was taken by the Ruſſians: and, the next year, Charles Guſtavus of Sweden overran the greateſt part of Poland, and ſeized upon Poliſh Pruſſia. The reſiſtance made to this invader by the ſingle city of Dantzick gave the Poles time to re-aſſemble; and their king John Caſimir, who had fled into Siberia, being joined by the Tartars, fell upon the Swedes, who were either diſperſed or exterminated. Peace was concluded in 1660 at Oliva; by which however the Poles were obliged to reſign their pretenſions to Livonia, and to cede Smolenſko, Kiow, and other places, to the Ruſſians. Eight years after this, the Poliſh nobles became diſſatisfied with their king: and their king, in return being diſſatisfied with the nobles, abdicated the throne, and retired into France, where he died. By the peace of Oliva, it was expreſsly ſtipulated, " that all the ſubjects of " Poland, of whatever condition or chriſtian

"sect they might be, should be reinstated in "all their rights and privileges, whether civil "or ecclesiastic, which they had heretofore "enjoyed according to the laws of the "kingdom."

John Casimir was succeeded by Michael Thomas Wisnowiski. His reign was short and unfortunate. The Turks wrested from him the fortress of Kaminiec, and all the province of Podolia.

On the death of Michael in 1674, the Polish crown was conferred on John Sobieski, high marshal and general in chief of the kingdom, who had acquired great reputation by a signal victory gained over the Turks at Choczim. Sobieski protected the protestants; but they had lost much of their consequence, by insensibly losing their place in the senate; for though they had not been declared inadmissible into that body by any law, yet as the nomination of members depended on the king, and the kings had always been catholics, they had named none but those of their own communion. This martial prince, in 1683, entered into a league with the

the Auftrians, for the defence of Chriftendom (as the chriftian countries were then called) againft the Turks, whom by a decifive victory he obliged to raife the fiege of Vienna.

After the death of Sobiefki in 1696, Frederic Auguftus, elector of Saxony, was chofen king of Poland in 1698. In 1699, by a peace concluded at Carlowitz, between the confederated Germans and Poles on the one part, and the Turks on the other, the Ottoman court reftored to the Poles Podolia and the fortrefs of Kaminiec. The Poles, on the ratification of the peace of Carlowitz, infifted that the king fhould fend back his Saxon forces into Germany: but he found means to retain them, by reprefenting the neceffity of oppofing them to the Swedes in Livonia. —Auguftus in 1700 entered into a confederacy with the Danes, Ruffians, and Brandenburghers againft Charles XII. king of Sweden; in which war Auguftus was defeated by the Swedes in feveral battles. He was depofed from the throne by Charles, who alfo raifed Staniflaus to the throne in

his ſtead, in 1704. Staniſlaus remained on the throne during the proſperity of his heroic friend and patron. But Charles XII. being defeated at Pultowa by the Ruſſians (whom he had taught, according to the prediction of Peter the Great, to conquer him), and obliged to take refuge in Turkey, Auguſtus was by the victorious Czar reſtored to the throne of Poland. This prince died in 1733, after a turbulent reign. The king of France, Louis XV. on this event, endeavoured to maintain the claim of his father-in-law Staniſlaus to the Poliſh throne, by force of arms: but Auguſtus, the ſon of the late king Auguſtus II. being ſupported by a powerful army of Saxons and Ruſſians, was raiſed to the Poliſh throne, under the name of Auguſtus III. By a ſubſequent treaty, an aſylum and retreat was afforded to the philoſophical and good Staniſlaus, in the duchy of Bar, and Lorraine.

In this conciſe deduction of the hiſtory of Poland, I have endeavoured to keep a ſteady eye on the ſtate and condition of the

the different sects of religion; because it was the disputes among these that gave a handle for intrigue, and invited the interference of foreign powers, and may be considered in fact as the procuring cause of the ruin of the monarchy—a lesson that seems to shew, that states and princes ought either to grant religious toleration in its full extent, and unshackled by restrictions and exclusions of any kind, or absolutely to suppress all public meetings for the purpose of worship, out of the pale of the national church*. I therefore return a short way on my steps, in regard to time, for the purpose of observing that Augustus II. shewed all the zeal of a new proselyte in proof of the sincerity of his conversion from the protestant to the catholic faith. At a diet assembled in the year 1717, the first law was passed against the public exercise of the protestant religion. The law was drawn up by a bishop, read

* Leaving entire not only the right of private judgment in matters of religion, but that also of men and women, united by religious sympathies, convening in private families.

but once, and tumultuoufly paffed. This diet was diffolved at the end of feven hours from the time of its firft affembling. The time however was not yet arrived when the violation of an original compact between independent parties could be carried without oppofition. The year following another diet was fummoned, and this article was explained, and declared to refpect only the abufes which had crept in during the war with Sweden. The decifive blow was not ftruck till the year 1736, under the reign of Auguftus III.; when the catholics began by forcing from the houfe all the proteftant nuncios; and then paffed a law declaring them incapable of all civil pofts and employments whatever.

Auguftus III. died at Drefden in October 1763, and was fucceeded on the throne by the prefent king, the count Staniflaus Poniatowfki, in September 1764, by the title of *Staniflaus Auguftus*. The life of this prince, renowned for talents and virtues at his acceffion to the throne, and who has ever fince abundantly fulfilled the high expectations

that

that had been formed of his conduct, in the moſt various and trying viciſſitudes, ſeems to have been born, and exalted to his diſtinguiſhed ſtation, for the purpoſe of proving the doctrine that the preſent is a ſtate of probation, and not of an equal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments. His reign, though eminently diſtinguiſhed by the moſt patriotic diſintereſtedneſs as well as wiſdom, has been one ſcene of confuſion, convulſion and diſaſter. In many political conſtitutions, and in many caſes, the fate of princes and ſtates depends on the characters of thoſe who hold the reins of government. But this general rule, it ſeems, admits of ſome exceptions. As in the moral world the beſt and the moſt virtuous men are not always the happieſt, ſo it may likewiſe happen in the political world, (that thoſe princes and legiſlators ſuffer the greateſt misfortunes who have the leaſt deſerved them. An overbearing force, ariſing out of an extreme peculiarity and as it were capriciouſneſs in the internal conſtitution of Poland, and alſo in the characters, intereſts,

refts, and views of neighbouring potentates,) defied all the genius and virtues of Staniflaus Auguftus, and equally triumphed over moral rectitude and political prudence.

From a ftupor that had fallen on Poland from ihe interferenee of foreign powers, whofe arms and intrigues dictated all the great meafures of government, it came to pafs, that the native Poles feemed to forget their political exiftence; and no one, from education or experience, had attained the qualifications neceffary for difcharging, particularly with regard to foreign affairs, the functions of a politician and ftatefman: infomuch that, when it became indifpenfably neceffary to write occafionally to countries beyond the frontiers, foreigners were employed in this bufinefs. Neither was the fcience of war known to any others befides thofe whom the fpirit of adventure had thrown into the military fervice of other nations. In thefe circumftances, the king eftablifhed a corps of cadets, for which purpofe he employed, in the two firft years of his reign, the fum of 120,000 ducats out of

of his own private fortune, as appears by the declaration of the constitution in 1766. The Pruſſian miniſter in Poland wrote to his maſter, that this inſtitution was the forerunner of projects which it would be proper to cruſh in the bud. The eſtabliſhment of a corps of cadets could not be openly ſtated as a ſubject of complaint: Frederic therefore reſolved to diſturb the tranquillity of the Poliſh nation in another manner.

Whether the Empreſs of Ruſſia was really ſtruck with the juſtice of the cauſe of the diſſidents; whether ſhe was animated with the idea of being the firſt chriſtian ſovereign to employ civil power in defence of a general toleration in matters of religion; or whether ſhe meant, by protecting the rights of the Greeks and Proteſtants, to form a ſtrong party in the republic, and gain the confidence and attachment of the Greek church in every part of the world; certain it is that her miniſter had orders to preſent a memorial to the king of Poland, ſoon after his election, reclaiming in favour of the Greeks and Proteſtants all their ancient rights,

rights, liberties and prerogatives. The memorial, having precifely determined what was the redrefs expected in ecclefiaftical matters, goes on to affert the co-equality of all the different fects in their civil capacity; leaving it however to the catholics to determine, by way of treaty with the Greeks and Proteftants, to what part they fhould be entitled in the adminiftration of government. The emprefs, ferious and earneft in this bufinefs, engaged the courts of London, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Berlin, in the fame caufe. The demands in favour of the *diffidents*, hitherto moderate and juft, and fupported by fuch a confederacy, were rejected by the Polifh ftates, to whom the memorial containing them was of courfe referred. Though the king recommended it to their moft ferious attention, they were fo far from paying any regard to it, that they confirmed in their full extent the conftitutions againft the diffidents, of the year 1717, and 1736. This conduct, fo little to have been expected, was inftigated by the intrigues of the king of Pruffia.

It

It is the nature of every paſſion, in every mind, to bear directly and by the neareſt courſe on its object. The defiles of art are ſeldom preferred to open force, where force may be employed with any tolerable proſpect of ſucceſs. Peter and his ſucceſſors on the Ruſſian throne, though anxious enough to cover their ambitious projects under a veil of juſtice, and even magnanimity, never thought of carrying any great end otherwiſe than by the arm of power. The kings of Pruſſia, who poſſeſſed not, like the Czars and Czarinas, a vaſt yet compact and undivided empire, made uſe of arms as auxiliaries to political management and intrigue. And Frederic, in particular, on this, as on other occaſions, employed the natural fertility of his genius, unreſtrained by any maxims or habits of moral honeſty, to practiſe on the paſſions of men, and to make a war of invention and ſtratagem on their minds. The hardſhips ſuffered by the diſſidents in Poland had driven many of them to take refuge in his own dominions. In caſe of their rights being

being re-eſtabliſhed, many would naturally return to a country where their civil liberty would be greater; where they could not be forced to ſerve in the army; where taxes were leſs burthenſome; and where induſtry would meet a ſurer recompenſe. A prince who knew ſo well the political importance of population, and who afterwards increaſed the population of his country by ſuch violent methods, was not ſincere in his profeſſions of good-will and patronage to the diſſidents. While therefore he made an open ſhew of being their friend, he took care to let their warmeſt opponents know, that at the bottom he was not ſo. The public memorials preſented by the Pruſſian miniſter in ſupport of the diſſidents loſt all their weight by the ſecret aſſurances given by him at the ſame time to the biſhops and the moſt bigoted of the laity, that his maſter would not be offended ſhould they be diſregarded. That miniſter, who had acquired an aſcendant, by an affected openneſs and what the French call *naïveté* of manners, over the Ruſſian ambaſſador, a

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young man, fiery and precipitate, and accuſtomed to think, that in Poland as in Ruſſia every thing ſhould yield to the will of his ſovereign, worked with ſo much ſucceſs on the warmth of his temper as to inſpire the deſign of carrying by force what he might certainly have obtained by manners more gentle and conciliating.

The king of Poland, with the moſt ſenſible part of the nation, endeavoured to avert the impending ſtorm. They endeavoured in vain to prevail on the Empreſs to deſiſt from her enterpriſe. They repreſented, after this, to the nation, that they muſt either make up matters with the diſſidents, or prepare to exclude the interference of foreign powers, and maintain the independence of their government. The diet choſe the latter alternative. The demands of the diſſidents were rejected; but they promiſed, at the ſame time, by every thing ſolemn and ſacred, to enable government to ſupport that rejection by ſuſpending the *Liberum Veto*, and by paſſing a law, that any motion for the augmenta-

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tion of the army ſhould be agreed to or negatived by a plurality of voices. The confederation was diſſolved, and the augmentation of the troops ſtill left to the deciſion of an unanimous diet.

The Pruſſian miniſter repreſented the attempt of the king to expedite a great army by means of ſuſpending the *Liberum Veto*, as a deſign to change the conſtitution and ſubvert the liberties of Poland. On the other hand, faithful to the inſtructions of his maſter, he laboured, through his friend the ambaſſador, to alarm the jealouſy of the court of Peterſburgh. The Czarina was induced to believe, that Staniſlaus had forgotten his obligations to her to whoſe favour chiefly he owed his election to the crown, and courted new alliances.

In the beginning of 1767, a declaration was publiſhed in the name of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, in which ſhe was declared protectreſs of the confederation formed by the diſſidents in ſupport of their rights. The attempt to ſubmit the augmentation of the army to a plurality of voices was repreſent-

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ed as an attack on the liberties and conftitution of Poland, and the king and his family plainly pointed out as having formed the defign of acquiring abfolute authority.

In every kingdom there is to be found a number of difcontented perfons ready to embrace every occafion of change; and this number in Poland had been increafed of late by the patriotic meafures taken by Staniflaus for reducing the dangerous power of many of the great officers of ftate; which had given offence not only to thofe in poffeffion of places under government, but to all who afpired to them in future. Thefe, with many other difcontented and mifled citizens, incited and directed by emiffaries from Ruffia and Pruffia, were able to form a fecond diet of confederation: and though this clafs of confederates confifted of the very bifhops and others who had fpoken and acted fo warmly againft the diffidents, yet fuch is the force of party rage, that they acknowledged the confederation of the diffidents to be lawful, joined with them in one ge-

neral confederation at random, under the protection of the Empreſs, and deputed ambaſſadors to Peterſburgh, demanding her protection and guaranty.

An extraordinary diet, aſſembled in the month of October 1767, granted more to the diſſidents than had ever been aſked; and, under pretence of redreſſing grievances, paſſed a code of laws, imperiouſly dictated by the Ruſſian miniſter. This code enacts, among other extraordinary laws, that the "*Liberum Veto* ſhall be maintained in full "force and vigour, in every thing which re- "lates to matters of ſtate (comprehending "almoſt every thing that falls within the "ſphere of ſovereign power), which are al- "ways to be decided by the unanimity of "all the ſuffrages; and every nuncio ſhall "for ever enjoy the right of annulling the "activity of the diet by his ſimple *Veto*, "whether pronounced verbally, or ex- "preſſed in writing!" This forms a part of what the code calls *Cardinal Laws*; which were declared to be "perpetual, for "ever unchangeable, not to be abrogated or

"altered

"altered even by the unanimous conſent of "every individual in the nation." And, to render this code ſtill more immutable, Ruſſia guarantied all and every article of it, and aſſumed the power of proceeding againſt every one who ſhould at any time do any thing contrary to the tenor of it, as enemies to their country and the empire of Ruſſia. This eſtabliſhment of laws, immutable even by univerſal conſent, degraded the republic from the rank of a ſtate: for no political ſtate can exiſt without a full and uncontrollable power of legiſlation.

The power of the king was now annihilated, together with the political independence of the nation; and he could only ſit ſtill, a mere ſpectator of thoſe misfortunes which his people were bringing on themſelves, but which they might have averted, had they liſtened to his counſel in the laſt diet, and ſtood by him when he was ready and reſolute to riſk his life and crown in ſupport of their independence.

The confederates, bigoted as they were to their ancient cuſtoms and abuſes, were no

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fooner left to the power of reflection, than they became fenfible that Ruffia meant only to confirm the nation in a ftate of abject fervility; to perpetuate the troubles that had been experienced on almoft every vacancy of the throne; to preferve an odious influence, and leave a door ever open for new acts of violence and oppreffion. The diet was no fooner diffolved than the difcontent of the nation, inflamed by the emiffaries of the king of Pruffia, and thofe of the Electrefs Dowager of Saxony, who could not fee with patience her family excluded from the throne of Poland, broke out with redoubled fury. The king was artfully reprefented as having fecretly joined with Ruffia in enfnaring them. Inftead of confidering that great and good prince as the greateft fufferer—inftead of confulting with him on the beft means of undeceiving the emprefs of Ruffia—inftead of waiting for a favourable opportunity of re-afferting their common rights, and maintaining their common caufe, they broke out into acts of precipitate violence; and formed feparate confe-

derations,

derations, which, without correſpondence, harmony, and unity of deſign and action, were every where beaten by the Ruſſians. The king of Poland, unable to oppoſe this torrent with his own forces, was obliged to call in the Ruſſian troops to his aſſiſtance; but this meaſure ſerved only to increaſe the general diſguſt.

The long continuance of theſe domeſtic troubles, the exhauſted ſtate of the country, and the preſence of foreign troops in almoſt every part of the kingdom, at length induced the houſe of Auſtria, the king of Pruſſia, and the empreſs of Ruſſia, notwithſtanding the repeated aſſurances the two laſt had given the king of Poland of their friendſhip, and of their having no deſign either to encroach or to ſuffer any encroachment upon his kingdom, to enter into an alliance to divide and diſmember it. Againſt theſe acts of violence Staniſlaus expoſtulated, and entered proteſts in vain. In vain he claimed the protection of the powers that were guarantees of the peace of Oliva. The king and the republic were under a neceſſity of acced-

ing to the formal ceſſion of all the territories claimed by the partitioning powers above mentioned; by which ſome of the beſt provinces were alienated from the ſtate, and the kingdom diminiſhed by at leaſt one third of its extent.

It is not my deſign to enter at this time into the robberies, plunders and outrages of the king of Pruſſia—his pecuniary exactions—his iſſuing and enforcing the circulation of baſe money—his ſeizing the territories, and by the impoſition of cuſtoms, duties, and exciſes, violating the privileges of Dantzick, and in fact laying that *noble* emporium, whoſe liberties had been guarantied ſo often, and by ſo many and ſuch reſpectable powers, particularly Great Britain in 1707, under contribution—or the numbers of perſons of both ſexes that he carried into captivity with their effects, for the purpoſe of increaſing the population of Sileſia, wreſted from the houſe of Auſtria. If any thing could add to the indignation which ſuch proceedings naturally inſpire in every humane and conſiderate breaſt, it is the

the futility and infolence of thofe arguments by which, fporting with the feelings and the common fenfe of mankind, he made a fhow of juftifying his claims on Poland. Nor did the claims of Ruffia and Auftria reft on any better foundation. But in Germany it is not difficult to find fome learned antiquarian who, from thoufands of books and records mouldering into duft, with the aid of a little invention, can drag from oblivion fome ancient title, renounced and cancelled by an hundred fubfequent acts: nor yet to find fome venal journalift who will announce his difcovery to the world, as a monument precious to every lover of truth and hiftory. The reafoning of the court of Warfaw, that can plead in defence of its rights an uninterrupted and undifputed poffeffion of four hundred years, is literally unanfwerable. "If," fays the King of Poland, "titles dug out of the obfcurity of "antient times—of thofe times of fudden and "momentary revolutions which erected and "deftroyed, ceded and reftored, kingdoms in "the fhort fpace of a few years, and even

"months—if these titles be admitted against "an uninterrupted possession of many ages, "the security of every state is undermined; "every throne must shake from the foun-"dation *."

After a commotion of eight years, a kind of pacification took place in 1775: when a law was passed by a diet under the guarantee of Russia, that the King should no longer exercise the privilege of nominating either senators and ministers, or starosties †; a privilege enjoyed by all his predecessors. This was a punishment for withholding his consent to the dismemberment of his country, and because he had refused to have any share in appealing to a foreign guarantee which had enslaved its independence. Nor was this all. The usurping powers seized the starosties,

* See the Counter-declaration which his Polish Majesty commanded his ministers to make to the Declarations from the ministers from the courts of Vienna, Petersburgh, and Berlin. Given at Warsaw, Oct. 8, 1772.

† Starosties are fiefs in the gift of the crown. They were considered and intended as indemnifications for expences incurred, or services rendered to the state. Some

ſtaroſties, and re-united them to their reſpective crowns, as part of their antient demeſnes. Having violated all regard to the ſovereignty of nations, they paid no reſpect to private equity or juſtice. In every town, place, or country, taken in open and honourable war, a certain time, according to the uſage of all civilized nations, is allowed to landholders and other tenants to diſpoſe of their lands and effects, and retire where they pleaſe, unleſs they be willing to take oaths of allegiance to the new lord paramount of the ſoil. But in the uſurped provinces the proprietors of eſtates were deprived of this reſource. In the rapacity of the king of Pruſſia, who exiſted by plunder, and was, as he himſelf ſaid, " a free-booter " by profeſſion," there was nothing ſurpriſ-

Some proviſion of this ſort was the more neceſſary in Poland, as the officers of the ſtate and houſehold have no ſalaries or fees. The ſtaroſts were tenants for life, or they might, with the previous conſent of the King, diſpoſe of them for a valuable conſideration to another, who then became tenant for life in place of the original nominee. Many of the actual poſſeſſors had thus bought in at eight or ten years purchaſe.

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ing. But the magnanimous Catharine II. and the pious Maria Terefa equally departed from good faith and the dignity of empire in their cruel and unjuft treatment of the inhabitants of Poland. In the diftricts ufurped by Auftria they were commanded to come and live upon their lands, and demean themfelves as dutiful fubjects, till the day fixed for taking the oath of allegiance, which all were then to take, under pain of confifcation! The emprefs of Ruffia allowed the term of three months, well knowing that no poffible advantage could accrue to the landholders from this affected moderation. Many of thefe were in foreign parts, and could not, if they had been inclined, return within the time prefcribed; nor could any purchafer be found in fo fhort a fpace, and under fuch unfettled circumftances. For till their claims fhould be fettled with the court of Warfaw, who might poffibly derive fome aid from the fears and jealoufies, if not from the juftice and commiferation of other European powers, the right of fovereignty was uncertain. The emprefs of Ruffia, in

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a very little time after her ſhórt period of grace, confiſcated more than 20,000l. a year belonging to the family of the Czartoryſkis alone. And what aggravates this act of injuſtice, the two princes who poſſeſſed thoſe lands were uncles to the king, of an advanced age, in the enjoyment of the firſt poſts of the ſtate, and had not been appriſed of the empreſs's order for a perſonal appearance, in time enough to have tranſported themſelves to the place fixed on for taking the oath, if they had been diſpoſed to take it. For a like reaſon the Empreſs Queen quickly confiſcated all the eſtates of the Count Ricki.

In the mean time the rage of the confederates continued to increaſe, and in November 1777, as is univerſally known, an attempt was made to aſſaſſinate the king; from which he eſcaped by means of ſome of thoſe unforeſeen accidents which are incident to all conſpiracies (eſpecially where great numbers, as in the preſent caſe, are concerned), improved with great preſence of mind, by his majeſty.

After

After all the diſmemberments made of Poland, formerly pre-eminent among all the northern nations, a ſufficient extent of territory ſtill remained to render it a flouriſhing and powerful kingdom, if the energy of the people could be rouſed and properly directed by a free and equitable conſtitution of government. Through the abilities and exertions of Staniſlaus Auguſtus a new conſtitution for that country was ſubmitted to a general diet of the ſtates, on the 3d of May 1791. By this conſtitution the catholic faith was to be the eſtabliſhed religion of the country, but a toleration was extended to all religious perſuaſions. The peaſants and villagers were relieved from that ſlaviſh dependence on their lords which attached them like cattle or game to the ſoil; perfect and entire perſonal liberty being extended to all people. It was declared, " that all power in civil ſociety ſhould be derived from the will of the people; its end and object being the preſervation and integrity of the ſtate, the civil liberty and the good order of ſociety, on an equal ſcale, and

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a laſting foundation. That three diſtinct powers ſhould compoſe the government of the Poliſh nation, according to the preſent conſtitution, *viz.* 1. Legiſlative power in the ſtates aſſembled: 2. Executive power in the king and council of inſpection: 3. Judicial power in juriſdictions exiſting or to be eſtabliſhed."

The conſtitution, of which this is a very general ſketch, at the period of every twenty-five years was to be reviſed by an extraordinary conſtitutional diet, which ſhould have authority, by a plurality of voices, to make ſuch alterations in it as ſhould be judged to be expedient. At the commencement of this diet the king, in conformity to the will of the ſtates, had ſigned an act whereby this free diet was changed into what has been called in the Engliſh hiſtory a convention parliament, and what the Poles called a diet of confederation; and in doing this it had bound itſelf to decide all queſtions by a majority of voices. To the deciſion of this majority the king, previouſly to his acceptance of the plan of government propoſed, conceived himſelf bound in conſcience

ſcience to make an appeal on one point. In the fundamental laws of the Poliſh conſtitution, the *Pacta Conventa*, it is ſtipulated or provided, that no ſucceſſor to the throne ſhall be named during the life of the reigning king. The election of a king of the Romans, during the life of the emperor, proved how great an addition of ſtrength was given to a reigning prince by nominating his ſucceſſor from his own family. The power or pretenſion to ſuch a nomination had, therefore, been watched formerly by the Poles with the greateſt jealouſy. But, by this time, a general conviction that every interregnum was a ſource of a civil and foreign war, had operated ſo ſtrongly on the minds of many, that they extended their cares to future generations, and various inſtructions of the provincial aſſemblies were ſent to their repreſentatives, requiring their ſupport of a decree not confined to the immediate caſe, but for the eſtabliſhment of a perpetual hereditary ſucceſſion. Many publications, and theſe ſtill increaſing in number, expreſſed the general wiſh of ſo deſir-

able a decifion. In the hall of a diet held 30th Auguft 1790, mention was firft made of the fucceffion of the elector of Saxony to the throne of Poland. When this project of a fixed fucceffion had obtained the confent of the diet, the king expreffed himfelf in thefe words; "It never entered into "my thoughts to bring forward any one "as fucceffor to the throne during my life-"time, nor will I countenance fuch a pro-"pofal unlefs I find it to be made with the "general concurrence of the nation." On his motion, public notice was given by the diet for convoking the provincial affemblies, in order to afford an opportunity for the citizens to declare their will and refolutions on the fubject of nominating a fucceffor to the throne during the life of the natural prince. No fooner were orders duly iffued for the convocation of fuch affemblies, than many members of the diet, as well as other inhabitants of the provinces, offered their fervices to the king, and concurrence in the mode of fucceffion propofed, on the condition that one of his majefty's nephews, and

and *not* the elector of Saxony, ſhould be nominated to the ſucceſſion. To theſe propoſals the king's uniform anſwer was: "You know, "gentlemen, that I had no ſhare in the de- "ſign of my nominating my ſucceſſor dur- "ing my life: notwithſtanding this, ſhould "the nomination fall on a prince of my "own blood, a ſtrong ſuſpicion would ariſe "that I had been clandeſtinely the author of "the project. But farther, my own opinion "is, that in chooſing a king whoſe riches, "rank, and connections, would give a luſ- "tre to the choice, added to the virtues and "political talents which diſtinguiſh the elec- "tor of Saxony, a ſucceſſor would be no- "minated who would greatly contribute to "the dignity, power, and advantage, of the "republic." In conſequence of this invincible reſolution of the king, all the provincial aſſemblies, except that of Volhinia, demanded the elector of Saxony as ſucceſſor to the throne. After a diſcuſſion on this important ſubject for ſeveral hours, the king ſpoke thus: "There is an obſtacle to my "acceptance of the propoſed plan, which,

"as

" as far as concerns myſelf excluſively, I " conceive cannot be overcome. I have " ſworn to maintain and abide by the *Pacta* " *Conventa*. This oath I have hitherto re- " ligiouſly obſerved. I demand now then, " if by the general will of the ſtates in diet " aſſembled I am freed from the obligation " of that article which regulates the ſucceſ- " ſion of the throne?" On this a number of members inſtantly exclaimed, " Yes, we " free you from the obſervance of it; and " we likewiſe bind ourſelves not to break " up the ſitting till the deciſion has been " finally adopted." The king then reſumed his ſpeech, and required of the marſhal of the diet, that he ſhould take the opinion of the members individually, that the ſenſe of the nation might be made a matter of general notoriety. The marſhal directed, that ſuch as approved the plan of ſucceſſion ſhould remain ſilent; and that thoſe who were againſt it ſhould ſignify their diſapprobation by their voices. After a ſilence of a few minutes, twelve members only declared their oppoſition. Zabiello,

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the nuncio of Volhinia, entreated the king no longer to oppofe himfelf to the wifhes of the majority, which exceeded in the proportion of at leaft ten to one the number of thofe who conftituted the oppofition. At the fame time almoft all the nuncios, fenators, and minifters, quitting their feats, filled the middle of the hall, and furrounding the throne demanded with loud voices, that the king would fwear to the new conftitution. The king, complying with their requefts, pronounced the oath required of him.

This change in the government of Poland, for moderation, equity, and found political wifdom, forms a contraft with the precipitation, violence, and impracticable complexity of the French revolution. In the former, the ground-work of the conftitution remains the fame. Refpect is paid to the rights and privileges of all the orders and claffes of the people; and the reform, begun, but not confidered as finifhed, is to be carried on, as the way to perfection fhall be pointed out by times and circumftances, by eafy gradations. In France, as a preli-

minary to reformation, all things are moved from their centre, and thrown into the completeſt chaos of confuſion. What this is to produce time muſt determine.

This new conſtitution of Poland appears to be the happieſt medium that has yet been adopted between monarchy and popular government: to the latter of which, however, it leans more than to the former.

By the Conſtitutional Act of the 23d of May 1791, the king of Poland is more circumſcribed in the exerciſe of power than either the king of England or the preſident of the United States, who, without the name, diſcharges the functions of a king in America.

Here ends the author's correſpondence from the continent. The following ſummary of Poliſh affairs ſubſequent to the date of this letter, and which in all probability winds up the hiſtory of the Poliſh nation, is added in this place for the ſatisfaction of the reader.

NO fooner was the formation of this new conftitution known to the courts of Vienna and Berlin, than they began to concert new plans for the total difmemberment of a kingdom, which, ftripped as it was of fo many of its provinces, might yet, in the poffeffion of external peace and internal tranquillity, recover its antient independence, exhibit a ftriking example of the invigorating power of liberty, and diffufe the fpirit of freedom among the fubjects and flaves of neighbouring and arbitrary princes: Though the court of Berlin, as a preliminary condition to that defenfive alliance which it had formed with Poland no later than March 1790, had required that a new form of government fhould be eftablifhed, whofe ftability and duration might be relied on *, the

* It is difficult to penetrate into the fecret motives of arbitrary princes; and hence it muft be allowed, that a great portion of hiftories, efpecially of thofe that aim chiefly at amufing the reader, by pretending to account for every thing they relate, is wholly chimerical. Yet, judging of the court of Berlin by a fair and obvious analogy,

the Pruſſians immediately began, as well as the Ruſſians, to draw powerful armies towards the confines of Poland, and to frown, and threaten the infant government with diſſolution, and the kingdom with renewed rapacity and outrage.

After the eſtabliſhment of the new conſtitution, it was incumbent on the king to give it efficacy by the active power of government: for, however excellent moral and political laws may be in their own nature and abſtractedly conſidered, phyſical force is neceſſary to their due adminiſtration. It became neceſſary to increaſe the army, and, of courſe, to provide both arms and money. The taxes were already conſiderable, and the government was reſtrained from new impoſitions, by the danger of overburthening the nation, and con-

analogy, it is not unreaſonable to conclude, that, in encouraging the formation of this new conſtitution, it had it in view, according to their uſual policy, to excite the jealouſy and reſentment of Ruſſia, and thus to prepare the way for a ſecond and a complete partition of Poland.

 ſequently

ſequently exciting a diſguſt at the new conſtitution. Recourſe was had to a loan, to be ſecured by the ſale of the ſtaroſties. This project, meeting with great oppoſition, was ſlow in its progreſs; and, in the courſe of the year, events happened which wholly defeated its intention. Peace was now concluded between the Turks and the Swedes on the one part, and the Ruſſians and the Auſtrians on the other. The Auſtrians were occupied with the affairs of France: but the hoſtile aſpect and intentions of the Ruſſians towards Poland deprived government of the means of offering a ſecurity for the loan, that, amidſt ſo much danger to the ſtate, would be deemed ſufficient. As the ſtorm gathered on the frontiers, ſubſcriptions to the loan went on more and more ſlowly, and at laſt ceaſed entirely. The common means of raiſing and maintaining an army being wanting, it became neceſſary to arm, and diſcipline, both the nobility and the burghers. Here the inveterate ſpirit of the Poliſh nobles, ever

more

more jealous of internal inſurrection than of foreign invaſion, and more anxious to preſerve their own privileges than the independence of the ſtate, oppoſed and incumbered the plan of their wiſe and patriotic ſovereign. "If," ſaid they, "we "put arms into the hands of the nation, "we ſhall experience the ſame conſequen-"ces that have happened in France. As "ſoon as the multitude ſhall perceive that "they are in poſſeſſion of power, ſo far "from ſubmitting to be governed, they "will attempt to give law to the diet, and "throw the whole country into confuſion. "In caſe, indeed, of imminent and actual "danger of foreign invaſion, we will then "conſent that the whole nation ſhall be in-"truſted with arms." To this the king replied, "In order to be able to furniſh the "country with arms at the hour of danger, "it will be neceſſary that we have them "ready. But this is not the caſe; and it is "with difficulty that our manufactures, new-"ly eſtabliſhed, afford a ſupply of one thou-"ſand ſtand a year. Directions ſhould, there-

"fore, be given for purchaſing them in fo-
"reign countries." This ſalutary advice was tardily executed; and when, at laſt, commiſſioners were ſent into foreign ſtates, in Saxony and Brandenburg the privilege of purchaſing was refuſed; the demands of Auſtria precluded her from ſupplying thoſe of her neighbours; and the French emigrants had bought up all that the manufacturers could furniſh in the remote parts of Germany. It now became neceſſary to eſtabliſh new fabricks at home. In theſe many months were employed; but, before the work was ready, the day for action was paſſed.

While the king of Poland was ſtruggling with theſe difficulties, ſixty thouſand Ruſſians entered into Poliſh Ukraine, and forty thouſand into Lithuania.

The whole Poliſh army, widely ſcattered in different parts of the kingdom, did not exceed fifty-five thouſand; from which number a deduction is to be made of ſeven thouſand for the garriſons of Kaminiec, Cracow, Czeſtochow, Poſen and Warſaw.

Almoſt

Almoſt all theſe corps marched without tents; nor did they arrive at the general place of rendezvous, till the Ruſſians had paſſed Oſtrog in Volhinia, and Vilna and Niezwiez in Lithuania. The commander in chief of the Poliſh army was the king's nephew, Prince Joſeph Poniatowſki, who left Warſaw on the 6th of May 1792. On his arrival at Tulczyn, which was then his head quarters, his muſter fell ſhort of 2000 men. That place was the centre to which troops were to be aſſembled from a diſtance of 50 German, that is, 200 Engliſh, miles, at a time when, on the ſide of Kijow, Balta, and Moldavia, three bodies were marching againſt him, each of which was equal to the whole of his force. It is to be added, that he had received poſitive orders to prevent the enemy's cutting off his communication with Warſaw, on which depended ſucceſſive ſupplies of proviſions, ſtores and reinforcements.

When the king invited the prince to take the command of the Poliſh troops, he ad-

dreſſed

dreſſed himſelf to his majeſty as follows:— "Where are my magazines? Where all "thoſe neceſſary ſupplies, the replacing of "which, a war even the moſt fortunate "continually requires? Where, throughout "the Ukraine, am I to be in poſſeſſion of a "place of ſecurity? In what place can my "military hoſpital be eſtabliſhed with ſafe- "ty? Where are my ſurgeons and my me- "dicines? From whence am I to be furniſh- "ed with my artillery of reſerve? with "horſes, harneſs and ſpare mountings for "the guns? Who has been appointed my "commiſſary for proviſions? Or has there "been any nomination of my quarter maſ- "ter general?" And without two perſons of this deſcription, it is well known that no commander takes the charge of an army. To all theſe queſtions, he was anſwered: "Although none of theſe re- "quiſitions can be at preſent ſupplied, the "equipment of every thing ſhall be imme- "diately forwarded, and no time ſhall be "loſt in ſending them to you as ſoon as "they are ready. Be your own commiſ-

"ſary

"sary and quarter master general; exert "yourself as indefatigably as we have done, "who, in the space of two years, have "augmented the army from eighteen to "fifty-five thousand men, and almost half "of them cavalry. It must be confessed "that much the greater part of this cavalry "are ignorant of one single manœuvre; "that the saddles, bridles and fire arms of "this corps are all without uniformity, "and the whole so totally without arrange-"ment, that to form them in order of battle "is impossible. This is no time however "for these objections. March directly to the "frontiers, assemble what troops you can, "and defend yourself to the best of your "ability.—Courage, military talents, and "the love of your country, will supply "every deficiency." It was thus the king spoke to his nephew, in devoting him to the service of the nation. And thus the prince replied: "I will go, for I love my country; "but I go as to my death; and, what is in-"finitely more distressing, to the probable "sacrifice of my reputation." It must be remarked,

remarked, that the length of the frontiers the defence of which was entrufted to the prince extended from Mohilow in Podolia as far as Lojow, which makes a diftance of 100 German miles, for the protection of which he had the command of about twenty-four thoufand men, broken into fmall divifions throughout the whole of this long line. Some likewife occupied interior pofts as far as Polonne—and this is the place, diftant 50 miles from both the Dniefter and the Dnieper, that was affigned to the prince for his place of arms, and which they had not even begun to fortify till the prince quitted Warfaw.——It is not the defign of this fketch to enter into any details of military operations. I cannot, however, omit to mention two acts worthy of the Polifh nation in the times of its greateft glory, and of the undaunted fpirit of liberty and patriotifm that fometimes rifes fuperior even to the love of life. Several fkirmifhes had happened between the Ruffian and the Polifh armies, with various fuccefs; when, on 17th of June 1792, the main army of the

Poles,

Poles, under the command of prince Joseph Poniatowſki, as already mentioned, unable to maintain its poſt at Volonna, retreated towards Zielime, cloſely followed by the enemy, to whom he was greatly inferior in numbers. At this place, being reinforced by ſome troops from Zieluce, it halted.—The Ruſſians came up in a body of 10,000 infantry, and 8,000 horſe. A general engagement enſued, which laſted from ſeven in the morning till five in the afternoon, at which hour the Ruſſians at laſt gave way, leaving 4,000 dead on the field. The loſs on the ſide of the Poles was comparatively inconſiderable, being eſtimated at no more than 800 infantry, and 300 horſe. Nevertheleſs the Ruſſian forces continued to pour into the kingdom in ſeveral quarters; and the city of Volonna, and other places of conſequence, fell into their hands.

To the ſuperior numbers and diſcipline of the invaders, Poland had nothing to oppoſe but the patriotic zeal of the people, and the bravery of the ſoldiers. The peaſants in many places furniſhed forage without

payment;

payment; others furniſhed horſes; patriotic contributions were made in every diſtrict; the ſoldiers, determined to make up by valour every deficiency in ſkill, fought with undaunted intrepidity in every action. During the retreat of the army from Volonna, 500 of theſe, like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, in order to ſtop the progreſs of the enemy, devoted their lives, and covered with their dead bodies the ground they had diſputed with their arms.

Staniſlaus Auguſtus, deſerted by his ally the king of Pruſſia, although he had notified the moſt perfect approbation of the new conſtitution; and without any hopes of aſſiſtance from the emperor, to whom he had made application in vain; yielded to invincible neceſſity, on the 24th of July 1792, and annulled, with the conſent of the deputies of the provinces, the political code of 1791; agreed to that which exiſted before that period, and even to give orders that the army under prince J. Poniatowſki, ſhould be delivered up to the Ruſſian general.

Liberty did not expire without indigna-

tion, or without loud complaint. Malachowſki, marſhal of the diet; Puchala, regent of the chancery; Potocki, grand maſter of artillery; Sapieha, grand chancellor of Lithuania, and marſhal of the general confederation of that dutchy; Stolicki, and other princes, refuſed to ſign the re-confederation dictated by Ruſſia, and entered proteſts againſt it. Upwards of 4000 nobles, and ſeveral others, ſought after the princes juſt mentioned, and carried them round in public.

The proteſt, or manifeſto, of Malachowſki concludes in this manner: "Fortified by the purity of my intentions, I "ſubmit to the divine juſtice the deſtinies "of my country, and the proceedings of "thoſe whoſe pleaſure it has been to do "hurt to the republic.—Oh nation that "I bear in my boſom! oh my dear co-"patriots! I partake of your misfortunes, "but I cannot ſoften them! Alas! there "only remains for me to offer you tears: "my fidelity and my inviolable attach-"ment are known to you; nothing can di-

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"minifh or deftroy them: but I cannot "give you any more proof of them, as they "have deprived me of the means."

He who was pre-eminent above all his countrymen in virtue as well as ftation, and in whofe breaft the welfare of his country had ever been the firft wifh, did not at this fatal crifis feel lefs, though he could not feel more, generous indignation and forrow. The king at firft expreffed a defire to go to Kurow, and there devote himfelf as a facrifice for his people. But it was urged, that although by fuch a mode of conduct he might fatisfy his own perfonal feelings on a point of honour, yet his firft duties were due to his country, the utter ruin of which would probably be the refult of that refolution. For, befides that a defeat appeared more likely than a victory, even fuccefs would only tend to accelerate an invafion by the king of Pruffia, who by this time had manifefted an evident difpofition to unite himfelf with the emprefs of Ruffia. In order to prevent a fecond difmemberment of Poland, to preferve the in-

tegrity

tegrity of what remained of the kingdom, and be in a condition for improving the accidents of time, for recovering real independence, Staniſlaus Auguſtus ſacrificed his private feelings to the duties of his public function.

The king of Pruſſia, who had concerted meaſures with the court of Peterſburgh, alleging an alarm at the progreſs of democracy in Poland, and, above all, the riſe of clubs or aſſociations deſtined to propagate its doctrines, invaded Poland in January 1793. A patriot hero aroſe, under whoſe ſtandard, even when the king was a kind of priſoner in the hands of a confederation of Poles in the intereſt of Ruſſia, a noble band of his countrymen made head for a time, and diſplayed all that human courage could perform, againſt the united powers of the Ruſſians and Pruſſians. Koſciuſko, equal whether in patriotiſm or military valour to the moſt renowned heroes of antient or modern times, in his character, ſituation and fate bears a near reſemblance to the Scottiſh patriot and hero, William Wallace.—His

army was totally defeated by an overpowering number of Ruſſians, who, though twice repulſed, renewed their attack a third time, after the ardour of victory had ſeduced the Poles from the advantageous ground choſen by their commander on the 10th of October 1794. Koſciuſko himſelf, wounded and taken, was carried a priſoner of war to St. Peterſburgh.

The king was ſent a priſoner of ſtate to Grodno. In the month of November 1795, he formally reſigned a crown which he wore only in fetters. A ſecond and final diſmemberment of Poland has taken place, which may be conſidered as politically dead, and as having loſt its exiſtence among nations. The cauſes to which we may trace the diſſolution of the Poliſh government are not very remote from common apprehenſion. But, for what perſonally concerns the king, the character and the fortune of Staniſlaus exhibit a melancholy proof, that the arrows of adverſity are not in every inſtance to be repelled by a ſhield of wiſdom combined with virtue.

LETTER LXIII.

Voyage from Pruſſia to England.

Baltic Sea, May 1792.

I LEFT the roads of Memel upon Tueſday morning laſt, with a fair wind, which yet continues. A number of Britiſh veſſels paſs us for the port from which we had departed. Bornholm appeared upon Thurſday. We threw out a ſignal for the fiſhermen, who came and ſupplied us with fiſh. This iſland appears to be fruitful, and is not encumbered with woods. It is, next to Zealand and Funen, the largeſt of the Daniſh iſlands; and from Bornholm the crown draws a conſiderable revenue. Beyond Bornholm, the Danes have long ſince ceaſed to have ſovereignty in the Baltic; the whole ſhores of which formerly acknowledged their ſway. The Swedes revolted from them.

them. Their kings ſold Livonia; and war deprived them of countries now forming a part of Pruſſia. Norway is the only relict of empire which remains. The Daniſh ſovereigns ſhould be cautious not to loſe this moſt valuable part of their dominions. The Norwegians and Danes hate each other. It will require the beſt management to rule over both.

Again I view the coaſt of Sweden, and the iſland Mona, the ſight of which laſt recals the remembrance of old acquaintance. At this ſeaſon of the year, vaſt numbers of ſhips are crowding to the Baltic: they are ſailing in all directions to the various ports it contains. We arrive upon the coaſt of Zealand, and with a lead-line fathom the intricate channel called the Grounds. The pilots offer their ſervice; but the captain, to ſave one or two guineas, ventures to be pilot himſelf. The buoys, in favourable weather, are ſufficient guides. They reſemble large ſugar-loaves. They are conſtructed of timber, ſome painted white, and others black. I can ſee the people

people of Amack upon the ſhore employed in the affairs of huſbandry. Zealand has already taken on her ſummer habit: an univerſal green covers her boſom. Copenhagen adorns her as diamonds in a head-dreſs. The gilded turrets are diſtinguiſhable at a great diſtance.

We paſſed the Daniſh metropolis, and arrived at Elſineur upon Sunday evening: and the ſhipmaſter having gone aſhore and paid the ſecond dues of his cargo, returned, and we continued our courſe. We entered the Catgate as the night cloſed around us.

Next day we were becalmed. It is obſervable, that during the month of April, and particularly in May and June, theſe ſeas are very ſtill. In July the ſtorms frequently begin again for the remainder of the year.

A gentle breeze ſprung up on the evening of the day thereafter, which ſoon carried us to our deſtined port in Great Britain.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

VOYAGE AROUND THE ISLANDS OF DENMARK.

LETTER I.

Voyage in the North Sea.—Elsineur.—Description of the City of Copenhagen.—Account of the Swedish Finlanders.—Of the Danish Hollanders.—Anecdotes of the Court.—Customs and Manners of the Danes.

DEAR SIR, Copenhagen, May 1775.

I PROMISED you an account of my first expedition to foreign countries; and here it is. When I found myself for the first time in the midst of the ocean, and no land

land in ſight, I imagined myſelf in a new world. It conſoled me a good deal to find that the ſame ſun and moon lighted my journey here as upon terra firma. I conſidered them as the only acquaintance I had in this new country.

The whale ſpouts in the waves around us, and throws up his noſe at intervals to reſpire, and exhale in return the breath of life. The Dutchman is in ſearch of ſmaller fiſhes, and caſts his line from his veſſel's ſide. He draws the ling, the cod, the turbot, and keeps them alive in wells conſtructed in the hold of the ſhip.

I went on board their doggers, as they call them. The Hollanders gave us a variety of fiſh in exchange for beef. The fiſhers continued pulling their hand-lines ſlowly towards them, and again letting them drop, keeping the bait conſtantly in motion.

At laſt we ſee the land of Norway, a mountainous country, which ſupplies England with baulks and deal boards. The pilot-boats ſurround us, aſk us if we are bound for any of their harbours, and offer their ſervices.

Their

Their wives and daughters ſit with them in the boats, and ſeem equally ſkilled with their huſbands and their fathers in the management of the oars and rudder.

We ſteer for the Skaw, a point of land whoſe light-houſe is to direct our courſe. The ſhips of different nations paſs and repaſs ours. The winds are favourable, and we ſoon arrive in ſight of the Skaw.—From thence we ſail up the Catgate to Elſineur in Zealand, one of the Daniſh iſlands. From the topmaſt-head I behold the three kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. We are in ſight of the Wingo iſland, near the coaſt of Sweden, upon which a tower is built, ſerving for a mark to ſeamen.

The Catgate is reckoned a very dangerous ſtrait; but as we have long days, and fair winds, we are not ſenſible nor afraid of theſe dangers. Elſineur, where we arrived next day from our leaving the Skaw, is the firſt town we touch at in Denmark. Here I accompanied the ſhipmaſter on ſhore to pay the Sound-duties, a royal toll upon all veſſels viſiting

visiting these parts. No vessel can there pass without the risk of being sunk by the frigate which is stationed in the roads, and whose crew keep a very sharp look-out. Some adventurous spirits have made the attempt, and escaped: but unless they can escape from the Baltic again in the same manner, or are never to return, it will serve no purpose. Whenever they are caught, their penalties are severe.

A merchant here, who had in course of trade received considerable sums from my father, by way of being grateful and polite ran through the streets with me to shew me the town; but he was in such a haste to get back to his counting-house, fresh customers arriving, that I soon lost sight of him, and wandered from street to street, not knowing where I went. I saw a number of houses built of timber, and in a very irregular manner. The streets are crowded with people. The Danes are rather bizarre in their appearance. If their hair is not so long as they would wish it, they add to the length by an addition of black cord or ribbon,

which hangs down to their rumps. The women all appear to have the head-ach; each having a white bandage wrapped round her head. They have many of them a ſickly appearance, and others look as if they painted.

I returned to the houſe of the merchant, and found him at dinner with a crowd of ſhipmaſters.

We ſailed in the afternoon for Copenhagen. We reached the roads about the ſetting of the ſun. They were full of merchant ſhips, and particularly of ſmall Daniſh veſſels. The Danes were playing upon violins, and every ſhip's deck was uſed as a ball-room.

Next morning we weighed anchor, and ſtood-in near to the ſhore, and to a lime-kiln, for which we had on board a loading of coals. The proprietor of theſe lime-works is an officer of the Daniſh army—a Mr. Oberkampts. Several ſmall iſlands oppoſite Copenhagen conſiſt entirely of lime rock, which is worked and brought to the kilns of this gentleman.

We

We brought out with our veſſel from England ſeveral maſons to build ſome new kilns for Mr. Oberkampts; and I had the honour, upon the boſom of the North ſea, to be made by their company a free maſon.

The ſhipmaſter forgot to take me aſhore with him—I was in bed. I took the opportunity of a Daniſh boat, and landing, I ventured to enter the city of Copenhagen *ſolus*. I had to paſs through the citadel, and I ſaw the Daniſh troops performing their exerciſe. I paſſed on to the middle of the city, and wandered from ſtreet to ſtreet, and from ſquare to ſquare, gazing eagerly at every object. This city is ſurrounded with earthen ramparts, and a wide ditch filled with water. It is interſected at different places with canals, where not only the trading veſſels lie cloſe to the warehouſes, but the navy of Denmark. The Daniſh fleet is ranged upon the left hand from the entrance of the harbour, incloſed with floating booms, which, opening at different places, permit the men of war to enter or come out. Near them are built all the

the neceſſary ſtore-houſes, and the mallet is heard thundering in every corner of the yards.

Acroſs the canals are conſtructed wooden draw-bridges. As I went along one of theſe near the palace, a melancholy accident occurred. Some perſons in a ſmall boat were taking their pleaſure upon that narrow channel of the Baltic which divides Zealand from Amack, and one part of the city of Copenhagen from the other. A ſudden guſt of wind overſet the boat; and the paſſengers, among whom was a lady, were inſtantly plunged headlong into the water. Boats haſtened to their aſſiſtance, but only ſucceeded in ſaving one gentleman: the violent current buried the others beneath the waves.

The royal palace ſtands in the centre of the city, and near this branch of the ſea, which has over it, as well as the canals, a wooden draw-bridge. It is a very large and heavy building: the convenient and elegant ſtables behind are more admirable ſtructures. His Daniſh majeſty keeps a fine

ſtud

ſtud of horſes: I obſerved many of them having ſtriped ſkins, reſembling, in ſome degree, the tiger and zebra. I do not know if this breed is peculiar or not to Denmark.

I went to the muſeum adjoining to the palace. Here are collected together the natural and artificial curioſities of every country, and particularly of Denmark. The firſt chamber contains ſtuffed birds of every kind of plumage. The inhabitants of the air are removed here as to a tomb, and preſerved with as much pains as the ancient kings of Egypt in their pyramids. The gallery of paintings next occupies our attention, and contains many valuable pieces by the firſt maſters. A naked Venus, in a part of this collection, preſents no very delicate object to female viſitors.

At the farther end of this gallery, we enter into a ſuit of rooms, containing each ſome particular ſelection of the works of art or nature. Of the laſt the minerals of Norway, the gold, the ſilver, the lead, the copper, and iron, in the ores, afford at once

a rare

a rare and ufeful entertainment; and the Danes in fhewing them fhew not merely the curiofities but the wealth of their country. The ingenuity of the fubjects of Denmark too is difplayed in the handiwork of Norwegian peafants. A cup of beech-wood, of a fmall fize, and the fides of ordinary thicknefs, upon being fhaken, is found to confift of five or fix cups, all fo neatly fitted to each other, as to appear one folid veffel, and this executed with a common knife, which every Norwegian wears at his belt; a cuftom among all the northern nations.

It would be endlefs to enumerate the particulars of this mufeum. Among the bufts and paintings of their fovereigns, I cannot overlook the picture of the famous Margaret queen of Denmark, Norway and Sweden; the variety of ancient veffels of gold and filver dug up or found in different places throughout the kingdom; and the productions of more modern date in the fame metals, and in marble and ivory.

 Such

Such collections do honour to a nation, and to human nature, in thus bringing under our eye works which could not be ſeen by ſo many in any other ſituation. Such collections facilitate the nobleſt of all purſuits, natural philoſophy; and the nobleſt of all wiſdom, the knowledge of the works both of God and man, which are here contraſted together.

The city of Copenhagen conſiſts entirely of brick manſions, in general neat enough and commodious. The Danes delight in what is ſhewy; they ſtucco their brick manſions, or colour the bricks, filling up the joints between each brick with ſtucco, and drawing along all the joints painted lines; and the window frames of ſuch houſes are commonly gilt with gold.

There are few ſquares, and only one of them worth notice, in which is erected the equeſtrian ſtatue of one of the Daniſh kings. The northern cities make the fineſt ſhow at ſome diſtance. Their gilded ſpires give an idea of much grandeur and magnificence, but they do not bear ſo narrow

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an inſpection as our own cities. Britons would ſeem to be of the ſame original with the Chineſe: we endeavour like them to diſappoint expectation at firſt, that we may the more ſuddenly gratify it. You have no doubt heard of the round tower, to the top of which a coach and ſix horſes may drive, by a circular ſtair-caſe, or rather road, within it, there being no ſteps; and we are told that this expedition with carriages has been executed more than once. I can eaſily believe this, and would readily undertake the ſame journey at any time.

Copenhagen muſt carry on a great extent of commerce. The canals in every ſtreet are filled with ſhipping; and you ſee a veſſel oppoſite to almoſt every houſe. This mixture of houſes and veſſels has a ſtrange but a noble appearance. I have beheld a new ſort of veſſels, and men on board them, whom I had never ſeen before, or ever heard that their nation produced any mariners. They come from Swediſh Finland upon the Bothnian and Finland gulphs. The veſſels are large, unwieldy and ſhape-

lefs fabrics. Their cargoes are no lefs ftrange than the fhip which contains them: but the articles do great honour to the ingenuity of the Finlanders. They confift in all manner of wickery and wooden work: bafkets, fhovels, racks, cradles, fpoons, *fhoes*, barrels, tubs, cups, chairs, ladles, and innumerable articles of the fame nature. To thefe fmaller manufactures I muft add boats of a fize fit for any veffel: the large fhip was half loaded with leffer ones.

The Finlanders are an odd-looking people, and have not the leaft refemblance to their brother feamen of other nations. They wear long coarfe coats, with boots; and their heads are covered with fheep-fkin caps. Their veffels have one maft and one fail, which I am told they pull down or lower upon the deck every time they tack. I cannot conceive how they manage to navigate the Baltic in this clumfy manner; when the beft conftructed fhips and rigging, and manned with the moft experienced feamen, find it difficult to navigate thofe dangerous feas.

The

The Finlanders, formerly the ſubjects of Sweden, now acknowledge the ſovereignty of Ruſſia. Their country is dreary and mountainous, producing nothing but ſmall timber; with which however they build a number of veſſels for the Swedes, who ſend maſter carpenters to Finland to direct the building.

I ſee a number of Hollanders upon the ſtreets of Copenhagen, driving a kind of waggons loaded with cheeſe, butter, milk, greens &c. which they ſell to the inhabitants. They inhabit the iſland of Amack, and are ſubjects of Denmark. They were tranſplanted here by a former king of Denmark, for the purpoſe of giving an example of induſtry and cleanlineſs to his people, in the arts of agriculture, gardening, and the rearing and feeding of cows, and management of the dairy. They ſeem well acquainted with the art of getting money. The prices of their commodities are high, but they are of the beſt qualities.

The captain of the veſſel purchaſes his butter and cheeſe from the Daniſh Hollanders,

ers, and his beef from the native Danes. The harbour has in it many little veſſels from various parts of the Daniſh dominions, loaded with ſalted and with freſh proviſions of all ſorts. The beef is ſmall, but well taſted. Many of the Daniſh iſlands are wholly turned into paſture for feeding cattle, which ſupply not only the Copenhagen market, but the Norwegians and Hollanders for the uſe of their ſeamen.

The Danes are a very merry people, if I can gueſs by the ſound of violins and dancing from every houſe. With all this they are proud and haughty, and their poverty makes them amazingly ſharp in their dealings. Copenhagen is the only part of Denmark which preſents a picture of the commerce and of the ſtrength of the nation. The walls of this metropolis incloſe within them the whole of the navy, and a good portion of the army too.

I am told there are few ports for trade in the other iſlands or in Jutland. The metropolis is the ſoul of the kingdom, and keeps the other parts of Denmark in life.

By

By Denmark I would not be underſtood to include Norway, which is independent of Denmark in commerce, and naturally richer, notwithſtanding its rocks and mountains.

The king of Denmark, not having many lucrative places to beſtow upon his people, covers them with ſtars and ribbons, and honours them with rank. The nobility and courtiers are loaded with gold-lace and ribbons. Even among the merchants you will find generals and colonels ſtrutting upon 'change with laced hats and clothes. This is court œconomy, whatever it may prove to individuals; and I wiſh the ſums in the penſion-liſt of England were ſcratched out, and a harmleſs title ſubſtituted for pounds ſterling.

What plain mortals we Britons are! None but the Dutch excel us in plainneſs of dreſs. While all the northern nations, covered with ice and ſnow, are covered too with the gayeſt attire, and ſparkle in the moon-beams; they have not the ſun above three months in the year.

The king of Denmark who imported a colony of Dutchmen, was ſo fond of them, that he viſited them once a year, attended by all his court, and dreſſed in the ſame ſtyle with the Dutch boors. A barn was fitted up for the reception of the courtly peaſants, and a feaſt prepared of the ſimpleſt diſhes. Here the royal Dane, after the example of his anceſtor Odin, quaffed goblets of beer, and refreſhed himſelf with roaſted cheeſe, ſteaks burnt upon the coals, and black bread. The courtly train, after this plain ſubſtantial repaſt, returned to the palace, and ſpent the evening in dancing and other amuſements, but without changing their habits.

Another amuſement, equally ſtrange, engaged at times this ſtrange court. They embarked in boats upon a lake, where vaſt numbers of ſwans, reared for the purpoſe, ſported. The boats ſurrounded the ſwans, and the gentlemen and even the ladies of the court found pleaſure in ſhooting thoſe inoffenſive bipeds.

Upon May-day I hired a waggon, the common

common vehicle for the middling ranks in travelling. A Danifh coach is difficult to be got, and expenfive, and differs from the waggon but in name. The genius of dulnefs and heavinefs prefides at their building: but the Danes, liberal in gold-leaf upon their fpires and windows, are equally profufe of it upon their coaches. The chaife or coach of every Danifh gentleman has all the fhowy weightinefs of our ftate carriages.

It was Sunday afternoon, and the gates of Copenhagen being opened at the end of the fabbath, which concludes early in the afternoon among the Lutherans, I fallied from the walls, accompanied with feveral of my countrymen, and a multitude of Danes. We entered a foreft at feven or eight miles diftance. Here were erected many tents, under which the Danes regaled themfelves. One of thefe tents was prepared for his majefty, who fometimes attends at this feftival, and was hung round with flags and trophies. The natives danced in different parts of the woods to the

mufic

musſic of the violin, and to the harmonies produced by itinerant German muſicians, from clarionets, hand-organs, and cymbals. I met here with my acquaintance the merchant from Elſineur, of whom I have already made honourable mention. He was eſcorting his lady to ſee the jubilee.

The Danes, having ſpent all their money in brandy, put oak and other branches of trees in their hats, and rolled back to the city in their carts.

I am preparing for a voyage around the iſlands of Denmark. Our veſſel is freighted to Faaborg, a town in Funen, for a loading of corn for England. This will give me an opportunity of ſending you ſome account of the ancient abodes of our conquerors. Farewell.

LET-

LETTER II.

Voyage around the Daniſh Iſlands.—Mona.—Fameren.—Alſen.—Langeland.—Funen.—Face of Nature throughout theſe Countries.—Great Belt.—Faaborg.—Trade of the Daniſh Iſlands.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Danes.—Voyage along the Coaſt of Jutland.—Account of Jutland.

Faaborg, in the Iſland of Funen, May 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I AM ſafely arrived at the fineſt and moſt fruitful of all the Daniſh iſlands. We left Copenhagen a few days ago. The weather was delightful; the winds favourable.—Having paſſed the iſland of Amack, we ſoon reached that of Mona, between which and Fameren we anchored for the night, and within a ſtone-throw of either ſhore.

The

The Daniſh maidens were diſtinctly ſeen milking their cows, and we heard them ſinging. The inhabitants crowded to the beach to behold ſo large a veſſel as ours appeared to them. It ſeldom happens that any but the ſmall Daniſh ſhallops navigate theſe parts, and we were ſailing through ſo narrow a channel, that, had the ſhip been loaded, we could not have attempted it. Our Daniſh pilot, the winds being moderate and fair, conducted us in this courſe, as the ſhorteſt to the place of our deſtination.

In the morning, as ſoon as the light broke to ſhow us the way, we continued our voyage. Zealand ſpread before us upon the right hand, Fameren and Alſen on the left. Theſe iſlands have the moſt charming appearance, and they were ſet off to every advantage by the ſeaſon of the year. In our more moderate climate, the month of May is frequently gloomy and cold; but in Scandinavia, notwithſtanding the ſeverity of their long winter, no ſooner does May commence, than it immediately uſhers in the ſpring and ſummer at the ſame inſtant,

ſtant. The ſkies are illuminated and warmed with the hot beams of the ſun, who has now attained a very high place in heaven, or, if you pleaſe, a great altitude. The ſandy ſoil of Denmark certainly adds to this warmth. I am walking the deck in my trowſers and ſhirt. We are neceſſitated to wet the decks every night, and likewiſe the veſſel's ſides, with water, to prevent them opening in the ſeams, from the extreme heat; and, for our own preſervation, we have an awning or ſail put over the quarter-deck, at a proper height, to permit us to walk and dine under it. It is too hot below the decks to exiſt there in the daytime. The heat penetrates the veſſel in every part.

Zealand, Fameren, and Alſen are covered with verdure: with the glaſs I view cattle grazing in the parks, and the huſbandman turning the glebe. Theſe lands are pleaſantly variegated with wood and dale, but I cannot ſee any rivers iſſuing from the country. The farm-houſes ſtart up every where; and wherever you ſee a riſing-ground,

ground, it ſupports either a church or a wind-mill. In this reſpect, the coaſt of England bears a near ſimilarity; and no wonder that the cuſtom is the ſame between two brother nations.

We paſſed a ſmall iſland in the midſt of the ſea, which grows wider as we approach the Belt: upon this iſland, half a mile or thereabouts in circumference, appeared one houſe, one man, and one dog. The inhabitant was employed in putting his nets in order. His boat lay upon the coaſt of his empire. Probably a frugal and beautiful wife was incloſed in the hut, to cheer his ſolitary hours, and to aſſiſt and accompany him in his aquatic excurſions.

I thought of Robinſon Cruſoe; but I could ſee no *Friday*. I compared this man with the Scandinavian princes around him. I determined within myſelf that he was happier, and even more powerful, than they; ſince he could with more expedition collect his forces, and beat the enemies which oppoſed him. Power does not conſiſt ſo much in extent of empire, and numerous navies

and

and armies, as comparatively with the power of ſurrounding enemies. This water emperor had no enemies; and if his ſubjects were few, they were loyal and faithful.

We approached the great Belt which ſeparates Funen from Zealand. We had ſailed during the ſucceeding night from our leaving Mona, as the ſea was open, and no dangers near us. In the morning I beheld acroſs the Belt, which we had entered, the hills of Funen, and the woods of the flatter iſland of Langeland, or Longland, apparently floating upon the waves. Zealand behind us, with all her tufted foreſts, dropped into the ocean. The wind ſtill continued fair, and wafted us from iſland to iſland imperceptibly. They ſunk behind us and roſe before us by enchantment. I am ſeated upon deck at dinner, and taking a ſurvey of the Daniſh dominions, as they riſe from the ſea! The volcanoes in the northern ſea ſometimes actually produce a new iſland to His Daniſh Majeſty: here a more natural cauſe produced them; but not leſs wonderful the effect occaſion-

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ed by their appearing as they now did to us.

We arrived at a narrow and intricate channel between Funen and Langeland. The Danish pilots from Nyborg (a town and fortress upon the Belt, and within a few leagues of this strait) came off in their boats, and offered their assistance; but we had already one of their nation for our guide. We purchased from those pilots, who were also fishermen, variety of fish caught in the Belt, particularly soles. They offered likewise some fowls, as hens and ducks, for sale. Whenever a ship is seen from the Danish shore, the fishermen and pilots generally come off, bringing fish, fowls, and greens. Formerly the Danes had the same custom; but they then brought nothing with them but their swords, and insisted upon guiding your vessel to what port they pleased.

Times are changed for the better; but they are not yet good enough, nor ever will be until the pirates and highwaymen of nations, bearing the name of navies and armies, are

lefs ufed in plundering their own wealth as well as the wealth of other ftates.

Our courfe now lay through long narrow channels, among the iflands adjoining to Funen. Langeland is, to appearance, entirely covered with woods. Funen prefents at intervals a more cultivated land, and variegated, as Zealand is, with hill and dale, woods, farms, and fmall towns. On the banks of the narrow channel we paffed through as we approached Faaborg was the country houfe of a Danifh admiral, moft romanticly fituated. The admiral was at the time pleafuring in his boat, and looked earneftly at the largeft veffel which had ever approached thofe fhallow ftraits.

A number of little veffels were building upon the fhore. The woods were at hand, and plentifully fupplied materials for the carpenter. A fmall town is fituated upon this ftrait, upon a rifing ground in Funen. Its houfes ftand as in an amphitheatre upon the hill.

Departing from this channel we again enter the open fea, keeping the coaft of Funen

nen upon the right hand. The ſame evening we came into the harbour of Faaborg, formed by a ſmall inlet of the ſea. Our pilot had, in conſideration of the voyage being nearly terminated, applied in the joy of his heart too freely the brandy bottle. He miſtook ſome of the land-marks, and ran the veſſel aground before ſhe had reached the quays. The inhabitants of Faaborg crowded off to us in their boats, and ſoon got our ſhip afloat and into the quays, which were covered with hundreds of the towns-people. As many as could get hold of a rope exerted themſelves in our ſervice. They had never ſeen but one Engliſh veſſel before. Our ſhip and ourſelves were to them the greateſt curioſities; and the public converſation in every private houſe, and in every beer-houſe, related to the momentous event of our arrival. As we walked the ſtreets, the doors and windows were filled with ſpectators. The Danes prove themſelves our anceſtors by their curioſity. It is well known, that an object a little out of the common ſtyle, as an aſs with one ear, will collect all England to look at it.

I had lately come from ſchool; ſo, as my firſt eſſay in converſing with foreigners, I repeated to the gazing Danes—

Spectas, et tu ſpectabere.

The perſon who gives us a loading of the produce of Funen is a decent elderly lady. It is quite common, in the northern countries, to find the women profeſſing various trades which in other countries are monopolized by the men. The Norwegian women are found employed in various manufactures, aſſiſting their huſbands in agriculture and navigation, as well as in the counting-houſe. When the father of a family dies, the widow in perſon conducts the buſineſs, which finds no interruption from an event that frequently occaſions ruin to families in other nations; and the females, equally converſant in the profeſſion of their huſband or father, carry on the buſineſs with as much or increaſed ſucceſs. This female merchant has ſome pretty daughters: they are frank and polite, and, with their mother, ſhew every

inclination to make our time agreeable. We have parties at cards, and dancing aſſemblies. Sunday, however, is the grand day of amuſement. When the parſon has ended his diſcourſe, the Danes inſtantly reſort to clubs, or to dance and ſing. Laſt Sunday's aſſembly was attended by a genteel audience, among whom were ſeveral military officers.

The Danes are fond of their gardens, and have ſeats around them, ſhaded with ivy, which is ſupported by a ſort of baſket-work of timber. Here the family drink tea, the landlord ſmokes his pipe, and entertains his gueſts after dinner. They even dine and ſup in their ſhades in warm weather. I have ſeen no inſtance of drunkenneſs among the middling and better ranks of the Danes. I have been entertained at dinner and ſupper every day at their houſes: their diſhes are plain and neat: their ſoups are much preferable to ours; having a proportion of the fineſt herbs and roots mixed in them. The company, while at meals, are ſerved with wine: the entertainer riſes in

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a few minutes after the meal is finiſhed, and thanks the company for doing him the honour of dining or ſupping with him, or ſimply bows to them: the company inſtantly riſe, and, bowing to the landlord and to each other, depart, or drink coffee, which is ſerved, either in the ſame or in another room, the moment dinner is over. Viſitors who mean to ſtop to ſupper then walk in the gardens by themſelves, or with the family. Tea is ſerved between five and ſix o'clock, and ſupper at eight. Sometimes the coffee is omitted immediately after dinner, and ſerved at four o'clock, without or with tea at the ſame time. Dinner is always upon the table of the higher ranks, as well as of the loweſt, at half paſt twelve, or at lateſt at one o'clock. The lower orders of the Engliſh ſtill retain the faſhion of their Daniſh anceſtors. Luxury has invented other hours and other cuſtoms; and as luxury pervades the northern regions, the irrational changes originating in luxury will no doubt likewiſe take place.

The harbour of Faaborg is filled with Daniſh ſhallops loading corn, meal, ſalted

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and fresh beef; live hogs and poultry; butter, cheese, and every species of provision for the Copenhagen market. The surrounding seas are covered with these little vessels, collecting, like bees, the honey of the Danish islands for the great hive, the metropolis. Our female merchant thinks she has the best right to our society, and is very angry if the captain and I accept of any invitation elsewhere. I have witnessed the famous northern hospitality in its greatest perfection, and unaccompanied with that drunkenness which is too common amongst ourselves at home. I do assure you, as far as I have witnessed, that it is only among the dregs of the Danes that habitual tipplers are found.

The houses of the Danes are built of timber, two stories, and often only one, in height. Before every door is a covered seat, a kind of piazza for the family to sit and drink coffee in, or to enjoy the air in the sultry evenings.

We sail from Faaborg to-morrow. I will continue my journal at sea.

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LETTER III.

DEAR SIR, North Sea, June 1775.

MY laſt letter was from the iſlands of Denmark: I am again toſſed upon the ocean.

We departed from Faaborg a few days after the date of my laſt epiſtle. The inhabitants ſaluted us with firing guns, which we returned with a blunderbuſs and an old muſket.

Our courſe lay along the coaſt of an iſland, which, like the other Daniſh iſlands, preſents a variegated proſpect of woods, gentle ſwellings rather than hills, paſtures, farm-houſes, windmills, and churches. Surrounding this iſland, we arrived at the oppoſite ſide of Langeland to that we had before paſſed in our voyage to Faaborg. We ſtopped in Nyborg roads, where lies

lies a frigate to prevent all veſſels from taking this courſe who are not from the Daniſh dominions, and obliging them to go by Elſineur, where it is eſtabliſhed that the duties ſhall be paid. We paid the Daniſh toll at Nyborg; and purchaſing ſome fiſh from the fiſhermen, we ſailed forwards towards the Catgate, leaving Funen and Zealand behind us, and keeping the Jutland ſhore upon our left hand. We paſſed a ſmall rock in the Catgate, which was covered with ſomething of a whitiſh colour. Several of our ſeamen took the ſhip's yawl, landed upon the rock, and ſoon returned with a cargo of eggs; of what birds I know not, but the eggs were excellent food, and nearly as large as a hen's.

Jutland ſeems mountainous in ſome parts: ſeveral ſmall towns are ſituated upon its coaſt. This country is famous as the birthplace of the Angles, from whom our country has the name of England. Some provinces of this peninſula belong to the Danes, and others to the houſe of Holſtein, the moſt fortunate dukedom in the world, and which

which has ferved as a nurfery for the kings and emperors of the North. The Danifh, the Swedifh, the Ruffian fovereigns are from this parent ftock. Indeed Germany, of which Holftein is a portion, is a fort of hot-bed for raifing kings and queens for all the thrones of Europe. When any race of princes become extinct, or are depofed or beheaded, there is always fome *coufin-german* to be found to fupply their place. Great kingdoms are not fond of having fovereigns from other great kingdoms, and prefer a German prince, whofe circumfcribed territories and fmall number of fubjects can never rival or claim pre-eminence over the nation which has adopted their chief.

Jutland is certainly a fine country, and capable from its foil and fituation of great improvements. Its trade is however as yet trifling, owing to the neglect of agriculture, and allowing their lands to remain in pafture for rearing cattle for exportation to foreign countries, and particularly to Holland.

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The Daniſh kings, in building the city of Altona upon the river Elbe, and which was meant too as a rival to Hamburg, have ſo far ſucceeded in attracting commerce*; and ſome ſpirited Daniſh noblemen have encouraged, and even ſupported, foreign and native manufacturers upon their eſtates: but, after all, there is ſomething wanting. The attention of government is abſorbed in an uſeleſs army and navy; and, in ſupporting a falſe ſhow of power and greatneſs, the roots of commerce and agriculture are left expoſed.

A ſtorm of weſterly wind prevented us from getting round the Skaw. We had landed our pilot the day preceding, by a boat from the ſhore, in Jutland. We were now, however, in known ſeas, and our own guides. The ſtorm increaſed upon us, and continued for two days. All we could do was to keep the land on board, or, in plainer language, to keep as cloſe as we

* Since this was written a canal has been cut from Altona to Kiel; thus uniting the Elbe with the Baltic.

could

could to the land, which in part ſheltered us from the tempeſt. Hundreds of ſhips were ſeen ſcudding before the hurricane up the Catgate. A veſſel, whoſe crew were more daring than ours, attempting to beat to windward of the Skaw, loſt her mainmaſt in our ſight. She was obliged to run into the ſame ſhelter with ourſelves, and with difficulty kept her ſtation near us. The tops of three maſts appeared, at a few miles diſtance, of ſome veſſel lately loſt in this dangerous navigation. The Catgate is a collection of wrecks of all nations; and here many a brave tar ſleeps at the bottom of the deep. The Skaw lights directed us during the night.

The weather became moderate, and the wind changed more favourably to us. We continued our voyage acroſs the North ſea, where I began, and where I now conclude, the journal of my firſt voyage and circumnavigation, not of the world, but of Denmark.

FINIS.